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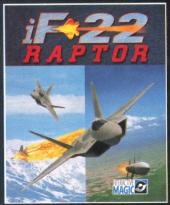
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#### **COVER FEATURE**

#### 37 .....PC Profiteer

two, did it not? Probably well ove in fact. It may surprise you to learn that there are a host of ways to make this money back, and quite possibly more... Check out lason Holborn's advice on how to make "loadsa money" with your home compute



#### REGULARS

#### 21 ..... News from the Home Front

Have we got news for you? Well yes, we have actually, and lots of it, in the form of software, hardware, serious and gamesy stuff. Read all about it!

#### 50 ..... The Leisure Dome

All your multimedia and CDs that don't fit into the educational, business or games sections can be found hiding in this section

#### 52.....Education at Home

Education expert Pam Turnbull shares her thoughts on the latest in edutainment and tutoring software with us all

#### 58 ..... Shareware Scene

Paul Noel shows us all his artistic skills in this month's Shareware Scene which looks at the quality of paint packages you can get on a trial basis

#### 60 ..... Mr Webster

Virtual Reality is where it is, according to one popular beat combo, and Mr. Webster investigates this possibly rather flippant statement as regards the Web

#### **102...**Write Home

"Honi suit qui mal y pense", as someone once said. And indeed, if you've got a problem with PC Home, then write in and tell us about it. Don't be scared!

#### 138...Next Month

On this page you'll find, well, what can only be described as a brief summary of what will be in next month's magazine. Cos that's what it is

#### **FEATURES**

#### **COMPETITIONS**

#### 32 ..... Smarter Encarta

Fancy the latest copy of Encarta, heavy-weight encycolpedia from Microsoft? Fancy 50 of 'em? Well, you can't have them all, just the one, but you stand a decent chance of snagging some of the £2500 worth of prizes that this amounts to



#### 34 .....Win 17 inches!



Fed up with your crusty old 14 inch display, with that annoying coffee stain on the front from two years ago? Well, now's your chance to bag one of two 17" monitors worth £1000 from Microvitec

#### 44 .... Make Some Noise

If you regularly "hit the dance floor like a bulldozer", then perhaps you should seek medical help. Or read Neil Jones' feature on sampling

015

#### 47 ..... The Web - Cutting the Costs

Neil Jones shows you how to make a saving using the Internet. It can be done, we assure you, or at least he assures us

#### **WORKSHOP**

#### 105...First Aid

Problems with the old computer? Step forward consultant and PC specialist Duncan Evans. He'll stroke his beard and make knowledgeable umming and ahhing noises

#### **112...Business Park**

It's the business, our Park. Check it out for the latest reviews of the more serious applications you can get for the PC

#### 115...HARDWIRED

Come browse through the hardware section and join techy Mr. Shaw as he explores the wonderful world of 17 inch monitors and game controllers. You'll also find a generously large round up of miscellaneous hardware

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## **124...Happy Joy**

Looking for a new stick to play X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter with? Then check out our extremely extensive Top Trumps style round up of the latest and the greatest

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#### 10..COVERDISC

This month we've gone Microsoft mad on our coverdisc, you'll no doubt be pleased to hear. First of all, we have an upgrade for Encarta 97 which will turn your copy of the most authoritative CD-Rom based encyclopedia into the most up-todate in the world.

Then we have a full product – as always – Microsoft Scenes, the Undersea Collection, a screensaver worth £19.99. As if that wasn't enough, there's also a 90 day trial version of Money 97, and a 60 day trial version of Publisher 97, so you can see what the fuss is about these products first hand. Are we good to you or what?

## Games aren



#### 66 ..... Under Development

He may not be as witty as Beefy Botham, as affable as Bill Beaumont, as cheeky as Ali McCoist or as scouse-like as John Parrot, but Darren Allan nevertheless had a go at his own Question of Sport with this selection of previews

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#### 98 ..... Home and Dry

This month sees the second and final part to our Discworld II solution, along with some tips on cheating in Blood and some

#### 18 Subscriptions

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TOP GUN TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG TOY STORY POWERPLAY GAME.	£10.99 R, £26.99
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TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG TOP STORY POWERLAY GAME. TROWH BAS FISHING 2 ULTIMATE DOOM. ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 2 ULTIMATE SOCKER MANAGER 2	£10.99 R,£26.99 £21.99 £11.99 £15.99
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TOP GUN	E10.99 R, £26.99 £28.99 £11.99 £11.99 £15.99 £31.99 £31.99 £26.99
TOP GUN. TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG TOY STORY POMERAN GAME. TROPHY BASS FISHING 2 ULTIMATE DOOM. ULTIMATE DOOM. ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 2. US NAY FIGHTES: 97 VEGA GOMES. VEGA GOMES. VEGA GOMES.	£10.99 R, £26.99 £21.99 £11.99 £15.99 £16.99 £16.99 £19.99
TOP GUN	E10.99  R,  E26.99  E21.99  E11.99  E15.99  E16.99  E26.99  E19.99
TOP GUN. TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG TOY STORY POWERAY GAME. TROPHY BASS FISHING 2 ULTIMATE DOOM. ULTIMATE DOOM. ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 2. US NAY FIGHTERS '97 VEGAS GOMES. VEGAS GOIRS. VEGAS GOIRS. VIRING CONQUEST VIRITA ROHITER.	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £15.95 £31.95 £16.95 £19.95 £19.95
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TOP GUN. TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TING TOTAL STAR TREK TING TO STORY POWERAN GAME. TROMY BASS FIGHING 2 LITIMATE DOOM. LITIMATE DOOM. US MANY FIGHIRES '97 VEGAS GAMES. VEGAS GOIS. VEGAS GOIS. VEGAS GOIS. VERING CONQUEST. VIRTUA ROHITER. VOYEUR ACCOUNTY.	£10.95 R,£26.95£28.95£21.95£13.95£15.96£19.95£26.95£24.95£24.95
TOP GUN	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £11.95 £11.95 £26.95 £10.95 £24.95 £14.95
TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £31.95 £16.95 £19.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95
TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £31.95 £16.95 £19.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95
TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG  TOY STORY POWERN COME.  TROM'T BASS FISHING 2  ULTIMATE DOOM.  ULTIMATE SOCKER MANAGER 2  US NAY FIGHTERS '97  VECAG COMES  VECAG COMES  VERTUR COP.  VERTU	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £31.95 £31.95 £31.95 £26.95 £14.95 £14.95 £14.95 £14.95
TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG  TOY STORY POWERN COME.  TROM'T BASS FISHING 2  ULTIMATE DOOM.  ULTIMATE SOCKER MANAGER 2  US NAY FIGHTERS '97  VECAG COMES  VECAG COMES  VERTUR COP.  VERTU	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £31.95 £31.95 £31.95 £26.95 £14.95 £14.95 £14.95 £14.95
TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TREK TNG  TOY STORY POWERN COME.  TROM'T BASS FISHING 2  ULTIMATE DOOM.  ULTIMATE SOCKER MANAGER 2  US NAY FIGHTERS '97  VECAG COMES  VECAG COMES  VERTUR COP.  VERTU	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £11.95 £31.95 £31.95 £31.95 £26.95 £14.95 £14.95 £14.95 £14.95
TOP GUN	£10.95 R, £26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £31.95 £31.95 £31.95 £16.95 £26.95 £19.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95 £11.95
TOP GUN	£10.95 R, £26.95 £28.95 £21.95 £31.95 £31.95 £31.95 £16.95 £26.95 £19.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95 £11.95 £24.95 £11.95
TOP GUN.  TOTAL INSANITY - INCLUDES PGA EUROPEAN TOU NETWORK Q RAC RALLY & STAR TEEK TNG	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £21.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99 £31.99
TOP GUN	£10.95 R,£26.95 £28.95 £28.95 £21.95 £31.95 £31.95 £31.95 £4.95 £24.95 £24.95 £24.95 £24.95 £24.95 £34.95

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Editorial

WHO wants to be a millionaire? Well, judging from the number of people who regularly play the lottery (myself included), the pools or bet on horses at ridiculous odds a fair few of us quite fancy the idea. And who wants to do proper work to earn that extra dosh? Well, not me that's for sure. Why do you think I do this job for a living?

Buying a PC and all the software you need and want for it probably doesn't (at first glance anyway), seem like the best way to make your fortune. But owning a PC can actually offer a quicker, easier and, well, generally more fun way to make a few extra quid. In fact, once you start coming up with money spinning ways to put your PC to work, you'll soon realise there are a lot more opportunities to supplement your income than you'd believe possible.

In this month's cover feature Jason Holborn looks at some of the more feasible ideas and offers some sound advice. OK, so the chances of actually becoming a millionaire overnight thanks to your home computer are pretty slim (unless it picks the winning horses in an accumulator of course) but you can certainly make a tidy sum out of your PC if you put your mind to it. Just remember, start small but think big and who knows where you'll end up this time next year! Oh, and if you ever do hit the big time, don't forget where that idea first came from!

Wayne Williams Editor waynew@idg.co.uk

## CHOME

#### **MEET THE TEAM**



Darren Allan

If Daz was a superhero he'd have to be The Incredible Hulk. Only it doesn't take an angry outburst to make him turn green and start smashing up the place. Just a couple of shandies on a Saturday night darrena@idg.co.uk



**Andy Shaw** 

Andy would have to be Mr. Fantastic. Not because he is fantastic but because of his long stretchy digits which have scared many a soul up Macclesfield way. And the less said about his toes...

andys@idg.co.uk



Darren Evans

Reviews ed Dazze would have to be the Human Torch. Not because he's hot stuff (obviously) but because he's always "Flaming this" and "Flaming that". Or words to that effect anyway

darrene@idg.co.uk



Paul Noel

Paul would have to be Tarzan, Lord of the apes, mainly because of his long hair, equivalent intellectual status and propensity for loincloths. Oh, and he is an ape as well pchome@idg.co.uk



Tamla Swift

Tamla would have to be the invisible girl, because whenever there's work to be done she suddenly, and inexplicably just disappears... Yet still knows when we've been talking about her

tamlas@idg.co.uk

#### Editorial

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NCARTA is the world's leading multimedia encyclopedia and the World English Edition is specially designed for the UK. Microsoft has committed itself to providing localised consumer titles, where appropriate. The UK is the largest market for CD-Roms outside the US and, as a result, an increasing number of titles have been created for this home audience.

Localisation is an expensive, labour intensive task: The Encarta 97 Encyclopedia World English Edition is prepared for the UK market by Websters, a London-based publishing company with a 40 strong editorial team who also draw on the expertise of a number of specialist contributors

The preparation of localised UK versions is a complex process. It involves far more than changing the odd spelling and often involves developing new content - Encarta Encyclopedia is a good example of this.

The localisation work begins with the whole body of text (about 10 million words in the case of Encarta 97 Encyclopedia) being adapted for a UK audience, including spelling and grammar and cultural context. But Websters' work goes much further. In the case of Encarta 97 Encyclopedia, not only the content of the articles but the whole categorisation structure of the encyclopedia was reviewed and altered for the UK.

Secondly, more detailed areas of the product's content are considered in terms of its target audience - a UK version will focus on football where a US version would focus on baseball. Audio segments are then re-recorded with a character voice appropriate to the country of choice. An image such as that of the Robin has been replaced to show the European Robin - a different bird from the one that lives in America!

When the content has been localised, it is then subject to final review and packaging is scrutinised so that the design is appropriate to the home market.

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The Encarta Updates are for the World English Edition only



#### **Essential updates**

ENCARTA 97 provides 35 new articles and over 300 new Web links every month by means of the updates that are available from the Encarta World English Web site http://encarta.eng.msn.com/. Monthly updates help to make Encarta one of the most up-to-date and comprehensive sources of reference information available for the whole family.

For example, the March 1997 monthly updates include new yearbook articles on such subjects as the Hale-Bopp comet which was visible in the night skies over the Easter period. Related Web links associated with this story include one to the official NASA Web site, as well as links to and from the original Encarta entry about comets in the main Encyclopedia.

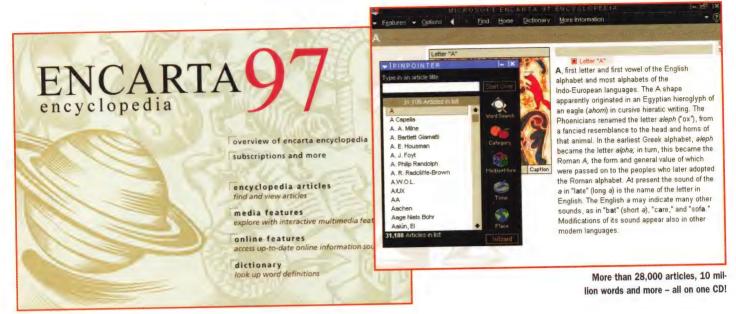
Other new yearbook entries include an article about the 1997 Oscars, where independent film company, Miramax, took home the honours with an unprecedented nine Oscars for The English Patient. Useful Web links for film enthusiasts include one to the official site of the Academy of Motion Picture, Arts and Sciences which hosts the Oscars every year.

Update feature articles available in March included an in-depth look into the mysterious Gulf War Syndrome which is reported to have affected soldiers who took part in the hostilities. Useful Web links for this story include one to the Public Broadcast Service in the US who has provided an in-depth report on the issue in conjunction with the BBC.

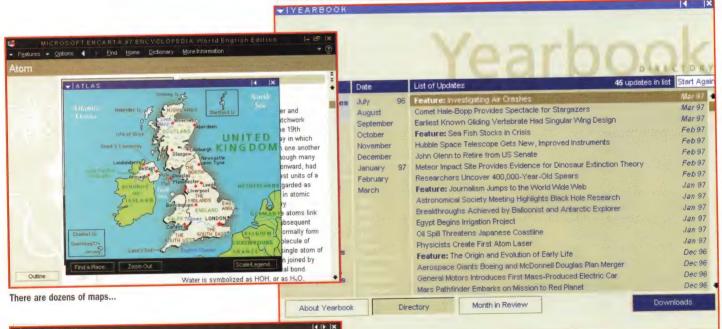
Encarta has a wealth of multimedia features including more than 28,000 articles, more than 3,000 new or updated entries for 1997, plus 350,000 links to related topics, more than 8,000 vivid photos and illustrations, 100 videos and animations, over 900 maps, more than 9.5 hours of sound, thousands of links to the World Wide Web, 100 guided tours, easy to copy and paste text, maps and charts and photos into school work.

The UK edition of Encarta has been produced to follow and adhere to the National Curriculum. According to The Times Educational Supplement (14.3.97) "Encarta 97 is now a serious educational tool and great care is taken to make the product useful and enjoyable for school children".

## COVER CD • COVER CD • COVER CD



Encarta 97 is probably the most comprehensive encyclopaedia available



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Aftermath of Atom
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...every animal you can think of and more!

Go to the Yearbook after adding the updates to see the new articles

#### Come and get them...

THERE are eight months worth of Encarta updates here, adding information, events and facts that have occurred since the CD was created. If you haven't updated your copy of Encarta 97 yet, you're looking at information that is now a year old!

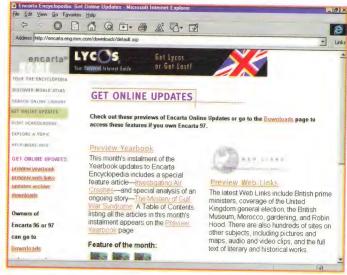
Copy the files in the \ENCARTA folder on the CD to your \Program Files\Microsoft Reference\Encarta Encyclopedia World English\Updates folder on your hard drive. (Assuming, of course, that this is where you installed Encarta to.)

To copy the files, load Windows Explorer and change to the CD-Rom drive by clicking it in the left-hand pane. Double click the Encarta folder on the right to open it. Click once on the first file, hold down the shift key and click the last file to select them all. Go to the Edit menu and select Copy. Now find the Encarta

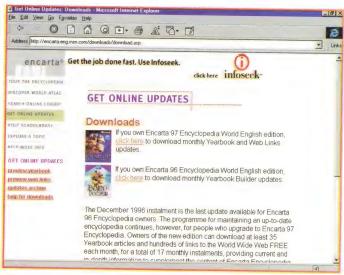
## COVER CD • COVER CD • COVER CD

folder on your hard disk drive and select Edit, Paste.

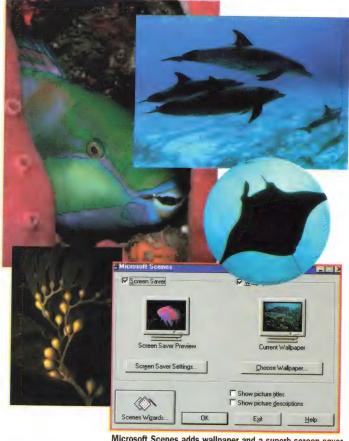
Then start Encarta and choose Online Features. Select Downloads and from there choose Integrate. At this point it may take some time, depending on the speed of your computer, but eventually it will add all the updates for August '96 to March '97 everything avail-ASIA able at the time we went to press. You'll need around 10Mb of hard disk space. When it has finished, go to the yearbook to look at the new articles. Ocean Location: \encarta



There are updates available on the Internet...



...but save yourself the time and cost of downloading with our CD updates



Microsoft Scenes adds wallpaper and a superb screen saver

#### **Microsoft Scenes V2** (Undersea Collection)

MICROSOFT Scenes displays full-colour photographs or pictures on the computer screen as the screen saver and wallpaper. Using transition effects, the Microsoft Scenes screen saver changes images one after another while your computer is idle, reducing wear on your screen and providing security for your system by hiding your work-in-progress and offering password pro-

When you work at the Microsoft Windows desktop, the Microsoft Scenes wallpaper displays behind all open windows, dialog boxes, icons and other desktop items. You can display the same wallpaper picture continuously or change the wallpaper picture each time the screen saver changes.

Each of the new Microsoft Scenes collections - which include Brain Twister, Undersea, Sierra Club Wildlife, Sierra Club Nature, Sports Extremes, Flight and Hollywood collections - contain high-quality images. You can install just one or all of the collections. On the PC Home CD is the complete Undersea collection. However, you can personalise your screen saver and wallpaper by creating a Microsoft Scenes personal collection that contains your own pictures.

Each picture in a Microsoft Scenes collection comes with a title that identifies the picture and a Picture Description window with more detailed text about the picture. For a personal collection, you can add your own titles, descriptions, and photo credits.

The Scenes Wizard makes it easy to create, edit, organise, share and enjoy personal Scenes collections. It's easy to quickly put your favourite snapshots onscreen. Using the Wizard you can create a new collection using individual picture files in any of the Scenes compatible formats. You can edit or change the order of the pictures within a collection, and add and edit the picture titles and descriptions, perhaps to mark and anniversary or a special vacation. The Wizard also enables you to copy a collection to floppy disk, so that you can pass it on to your friends, or to add a collection to Scenes.

Location: \scenes

Installation: Run setup.exe in the disk1 folder

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masses of free software. You get FIVE e-mail addresses – so everyone who uses your computer can have their own address. There's access to over 25,000 news forums. And the fastest connection to the Internet (for you techies, that's 33.6kbps). We'll even provide you with a massive 10 megabytes of free web space for you to create your own home pages.

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#### **Music Ace**

THIS is a fun and educational program for people of all ages, from children to adult. It teaches you all about music, such as the types of notes, the bass and treble clef and so on, and also lets you create your own music.

Location:

\musicace\winfiles\mademo\95 Installation: Run automad.exe

Learn music notation and create your own music with Music Ace

#### Family Health Encyclopedia and Amazing Animals

SIMPLE explanations of more than 650 diseases and disorders, practical guidance on preventative health care, and reassuring advice on caring for your family, and a magical interactive toybox featuring Henry the lizard to guide you through games and activities galore. These are non-interactive demos, but can easily be uninstalled afterwards.

Location: \dkmm Installation: Run setup.exe

#### **Microsoft Money 97**

MAKING sense of your money isn't always a simple matter and keeping track of where money is coming from and where it's going can be a full time worry. Microsoft Money is the easy and smart personal computing solution which provides everything you need to take control of your finances quickly – including a complete set of tools that make it easy to manage your money, make sound financial decisions and plan for the future.

Now you can try Microsoft Money 97 free for three months with this special

version. Should you decide to buy the full product, you can continue to use the files you create with this time-limited version.

Location: \money

Installation: Run money.exe in Win 95

## Microsoft Publisher 97 for Win 95

NOW you can create distinctive newsletters, brochures, Web pages and flyers without any design experience. Publisher 97 brings the ease-of-use and efficiency of the Windows 95 operating system and the power and flexibility of an award winning desktop publishing application together to allow its users to create professional publications quickly, easily and cost effectively. You can try Publisher 97 free for 60 days with the special trial version on this month's CD.

Location: \publish Installation: Run SETUP.EXE in Win 95

#### **Internet Explorer**

SAVE the time and cost of a download with this month's disc, which includes the latest version of Microsoft's Internet Explorer – 3.01 for Win 3.1 and 3.02 for Win 95. Microsoft Internet Explorer opens the door to the new, active Internet by providing an easy-to-use, fast, and secure Web browser that meets and exceeds existing Internet standards.

Location: \explorer.w31

Installation: Run setup.exe in Win 3.1

Location: \explorer.w95

Installation: Run msie302.exe in Win 95

#### **Harvest of Souls**

SIERRA'S playable demo contains 360-degree panoramas in which you can use your mouse or arrow keys to look around an office that even Mulder and Scully would find spooky. You can also examine certain objects by clicking on them. To quit, press the Escape key.

Location: \harvest Installation: Run setup.exe

#### **Outlaws**

OUTLAWS combines first-person gun slinging action with stunning cinematic cut-scenes, to create an exciting Wild West adventure.

You are former marshal James Anderson, on a mission to retrieve your daughter, who has been kidnapped by an evil land baron. Drawn into a conflict that you never wanted, you will be forced to use your wits (as well as your trigger-finger) to rescue her.

Location: \

Installation: Run olcddemo.exe (Uses

DirectX)

#### **FSP League Monitor**

THE League Monitor is designed to store football league fixtures and results. With the results and fixtures data, the League Monitor is able to produce a wealth of statistics presented in a variety of different forms, such as tables, bar and pie charts.

Location: \football Installation: Run setup.exe

#### **Visual Home Deluxe**

VISUAL Home is the easiest, most realistic way to design, visualise and experiment with your home project before you spend money. Experiment with millions of combinations of furnishings, sizes, colours, materials and styles, including appliances, furniture, fixtures and carpeting.

Location: \vishome

Installation: Run autorun.exe

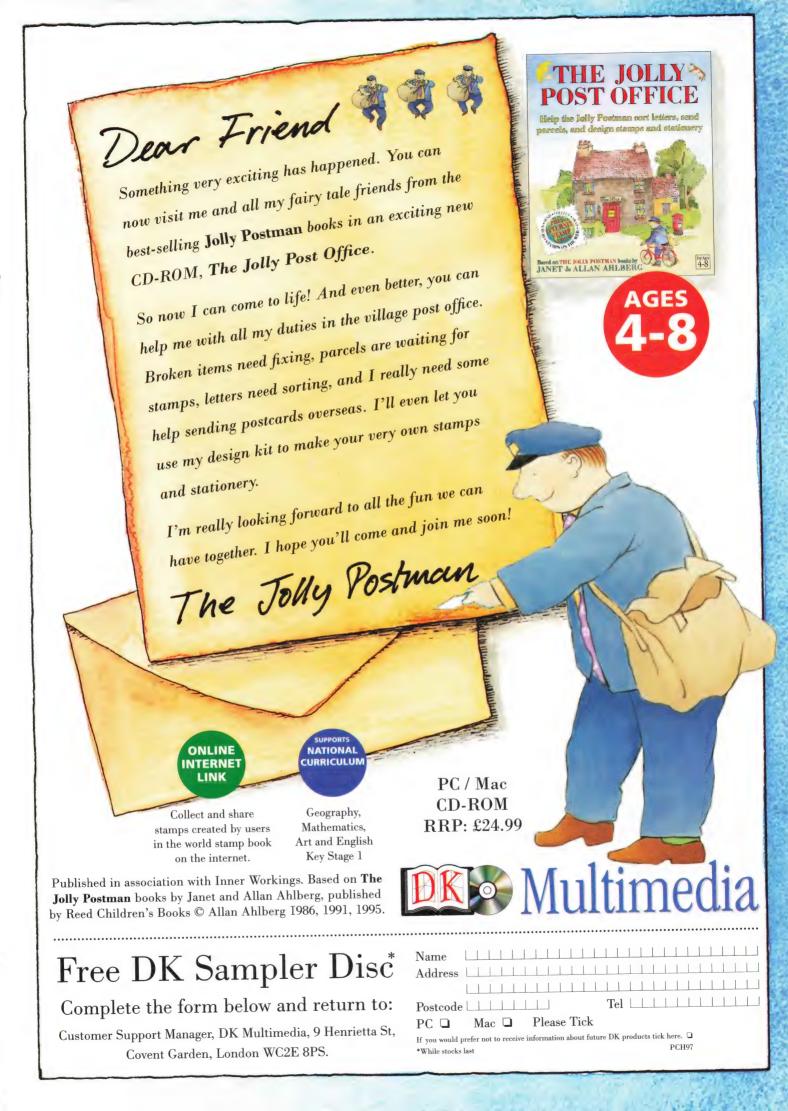


#### **3D Ultra Mini Golf**

THIS game from Sierra is a computer version of crazy golf, and features some superb graphics. The demo lets you play a few of the holes from the full game and is a real challenge to your golfing skills. Each hole is based on a theme and you can try the US wild west and Dutch holes among others.

Location: \minigolf Installation: Run setup.exe

Try this computer version of crazy golf – it'll drive you potty!



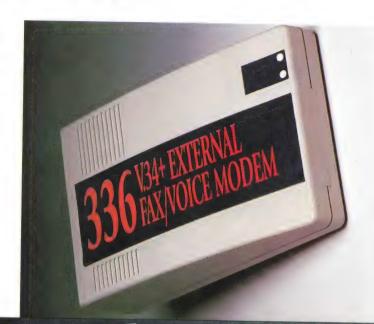
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Hook up to the Internet with a Hayes certified modem and MSN for as little as £75!

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With more than two million members world-wide, MSN is one of the fastest, easiest, safest and most popular ways to get started on the Internet. MSN provides a valuable collection of communication and information services which you can really use and original content that you won't find anywhere else on the Internet.



If you are one of the first 25 readers to take us up on this offer, you will get a copy of Microsoft's world-leading encyclopedia on CD-ROM - Microsoft Encarta 97 Encyclopedia. Worth £49.99, Encarta 97's World English edition is easy to keep totally up-to-date and comprehensive using the monthly update feature available over the Internet.

Combining the rich multimedia features of text, vivid photos and illustrations, exciting videos and animation, maps and audio clips. Encarta 97 Encyclopaedia is the essential encyclopedia for all the family. Children following the national curriculum will benefit from its specially tailored content, and with thousands of Web links, more information

And taking up this great offer is easy. Simply call 0800 333 333 and ask for Microsoft Encarta Modem Offer.

You'll be sent the MSN software you need to get online and be given the choice of four great modems to choose from:

Prophonic 33.6K Voice Internal for £75 (RRP £99) Prophonic 33.6K Voice External for £79 (RRP £99) Prophonic 56K Voice Internal for £99 (RRP £129) Prophonic 56K Voice External for £109 (RRP £149)

All feature a voice answer phone, fax send and receive features, plug and play mechanism and come complete with cables and software. The 56KVoice External and Internal models feature hands free speakerphone when used with multimedia PCs and K56Flex support for download speeds of 56K when connecting to compatible sites.

With a Hayes compatible modem and MSN, logging on to download your monthly Microsoft Encarta 97 Encyclopedia updates from the Internet couldn't be simpler!

Offer ends 30 June 1997



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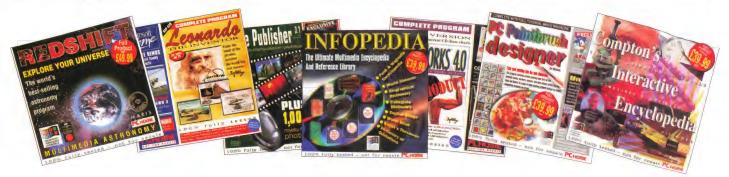
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## News from the \_\_\_\_\_ Edited by Wayne Williams and Darren Allan

## **HOME Front**

## Thrust into the limelight MMX

THOSE of you into on-line gaming will no doubt be excited to hear that a new organisation has sprung up in the quest to make multiplayer gaming a more widespread and accessible phenomena.

ThrustWorld is the name given to this particular gaming forum, and you can check the Web page out at www.thrust.co.uk. It has a huge number of games available for play, ranging from Quake (of course) to Duke Nukem 3D, Warcraft II, Diablo, C&C original and Red Alert, Descent II, Nascar 2 - the list goes on and on.

Each game has its own leagues and system of challenges and matches, so you can fight it out with the best in the country (and some of the not so good, naturally) to find out who's top.

Along with this there are a plethora of hints, tips and on-line info, and add-ons for the various games (i.e. a library of Quake maps) and you've got an extensive



Try on-line gaming the ThrustWorld way

site, although it is still under development as we go to press.

ThrustWorld also offers a mailing list and competitions and prizes, servers that offer a hefty

10Mb bandwidth with local call dialup, for the price of £17.99 per month (and a £12 connection fee). Check out the Web site yourself, or call 0181 808 3165.

## Design for life

MICROTEK has just unveiled the new Scanmaker Designer Pro, a bundle targeted at professional designers and desktop publishers. The Scanmaker DP consists of the Scanmaker 36 bit colour scanner (600X1200 dpi), plus a TMA-II backlight, Wacom ArtPad, Adobe Photoshop, Fractal Design Painter and a CD crammed with software. It weighs in at a very hefty £1599 - those serious about their design can get hold of one by calling 0181 200 8282.



Scanmaker Designer Pro is a truly professional piece of kit

## boost

INTEL has announced the launch of a new MMX processor - a Pentium 233MHz model. It will be the 10th chip in the MMX range and Mike Aymar, Vice President of the Desktop Products Group, commented: "Consumers now have a family of choices among the mainstream desktop systems, and a wider array of software titles using Intel's MMX technology."

It is based on industry standard benchmarks and users will experience a 30 per cent speed increase over and above a 200MHz model.



Make Pingu dance. Or just look stupid depending on your preference

IN our opinion there are far too few penguin based products on the market, so it's with open flippers we welcome Pingu to the PC. Aimed at 3-6 year olds, the CD-Rom follows the antics of the Children's BBC character and features 10 activities and five screen savers. The activities are broken down into five puzzles and five games and elements of the disc apparently support the National Curriculum Key Stage One.

Fans of the young penguin can pick up a copy now priced at £24.99. Further information from BBC Multimedia on 0181 576 2469.

## PO on the Net

A NEW site has opened representing the Post Office on the Web. Located at www.postoffice-counters.com, it allows you to access detailed information on currency exchange, airline tickets, travel insurance and mobile phones.

You can browse through a general information area too, along with an on-line post office magazine and a customer helpline. Plans are afoot to make complete transactions possible over the Net.



Get all the latest travel and currency info at the virtual Post Office



No space for a mouse? Well, don't use one then!

## imp your mouse!

THE latest keyboard from Cherry is aimed at those people who are a little short of desk space. The snappily named 11900 follows the usual 105 Windows 95 key layout but contains a useful little extra. Tucked away under the keypad is an integral touch-pad of the kind usually sported on laptops.

No pricing details as yet, but further information can be obtained from Cherry on 01582 768883.

## 20 speed madness

IF you thought the boundaries of CD-Rom speed had been reached, then think again Plextor has developed a 20 speed CD-Rom.

The Plextor PX-12/20TSi has a data transfer rate of up to 3000KB/s, with an access time of 95ms. A new tray loading mechanism is also a feature. The drive should be available now - contact Tekdata on 01782 577677 for more details.

## **Healthy** Net

THE Internet has seen the opening of its very own health clinic -Hyperhealth. Based at www.healthworks.co.uk, it highlights some 20,000 factors concerning diet, nutrition and human health and the relationship between these factors.

There are sections on ailments, organs, hormones, herbs, toxins and coverage of such diverse topics as anti-ageing "strategies" and memory enhancement. And memory enhancement. Check it out for vourself!

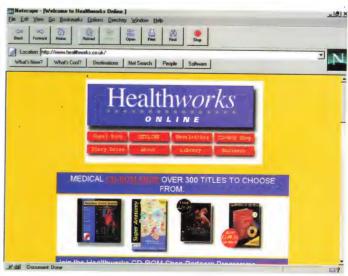


## Painter 5

FRACTAL Design has just announced it is releasing a new version of Painter. Rather predictably named Painter 5, it proffers new features such as over 100 new brushes, all with different effects and behaviours, and dynamic plug-in floaters which are used to generate all sorts of spectacular special effects such as burning, tearing and liquid metal.

The interface has undergone an extensive redesign, industry standard masking has been incorporated, and Web design has been considered with support for animated GIFs and quick button creation.

All in all it sounds like extensive improvements have been made to this next version of Painter. It should be on the shelves within the next month, priced £299 (and upgrades from 4 to 5 will be £79). Call 01756 704040 for Fractal Design's distributor.



I can walk! (\*crunch\*) Get yer' online health advice here



No more back problems? Well that's what 3M is promising us anyway

## The comfy chair

ARE you sitting comfortably? No? Well, perhaps the 3M Adjustable Back Support might be the answer to your bad back problem. According to 3M the support has been designed to attach to most types of chair and, thanks to its height adjustment mechanism, ensure correct lumbar positioning. The back support comes in two versions: The standard model which targets the lower back, and a more advanced version which targets both lower and upper back and "additionally adjusts to support the thoracic spine area." We've no idea what that means but it sounds pretty smart to us.

The BS570 (lower back version) will set you back £130, while the BS571 a slightly more expensive £150. Further information from 3M on 01344

## Top Gear

THE BBC has launched its first commercial Web site, based around the famous programme Top Gear. Located at

www.topgear.com, the site contain the latest

around and boast about it on this Web page. Git news and reviews from Top Gear, embellished with a lot of visual material - even video clips.

Plenty of advice on buying new and used cars is also available and there's the Fantasy Formula One game to keep you entertained, although you do have to fork out a tenner to enter that.

Jeremy Clarkson gets to drive a load of sporty cars

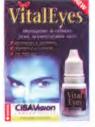


#### Reliability rating: 91 per cent and rising

up to Duke Nukem 3-D, Duke Nukem Forever (shades of Batman In 3-D accelerator cards and the company wants to get DNF out quite anything...The follow-up to Star Trek: Generations is on the starting of the first to use a new Russian technology called Caviar, which apparently gives 3-D rendered models much more realistic motion. will have to have far more money than sense to cough up the partner to buy up 49 per cent of the company's stock. This follows rumours that Demon is to post a yearly loss of approximately \$30 this month's most unlikely rumour: LucasArts is planning to snap up

ACCORDING to UK vision specialists CIBA Vision, people who regularly sit in front of computer screens often suffer from eye problems, due in

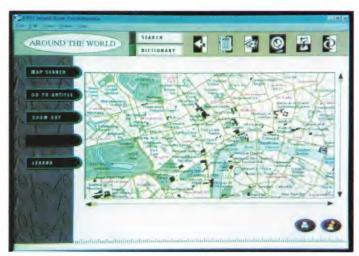
the main because they simply don't blink enough. CIBA Vision's solution to this problem therefore has been to come up with some new eye drops which contain a conditioner that apparently actually moisturises tired, dried out and uncomfortable



eyes. VitalEyes is also en riched with Vitamins A and E to nourish and con dition your peepers.

Available from decen chemists, supermarket

and the like a 10ml bottle o VitalEyes will set you back £3.49, al though if you're on the Internet you can request a free sample by point ing your browser at http://www. ibavision.co.uk/pages/vesample



One part of a very large World Book

## ncarta riva

IBM in conjunction with World Book recently announced the launch of a 1997 World Book Multimedia Encyclopedia. Developed in London for the UK, the program is the work of a company claiming 80 years of encyclopedia experience.

The package contains over 8,000 pictures and illustrations, 750+ maps, 134 videos, 44 animations and 500+ (CD quality) sounds, 19 360 degree models and more besides. Other features include the ability to highlight text, instantly define a term and a high performance search

World Book also includes an extensive list of on-line features including monthly updates, an on-line library and a selection of related Web sites. The result, World Book claims, is "a stunning encyclopedia that will appeal to children and parents alike". If you want to know more you can access the World Book Web site at http://www.worldbook.com or call free on 0800 214 887.

### Mitsubishi Says Belt up

TO celebrate the launch of its new UK Web site Mitsubishi is offering the chance for visitors to the site the chance to win a "drive with the world's top rally driver (Tommi Makinen) in the company's top rally car, the Evolution

The site offers all kinds of information about Mitsubishi motors, the new

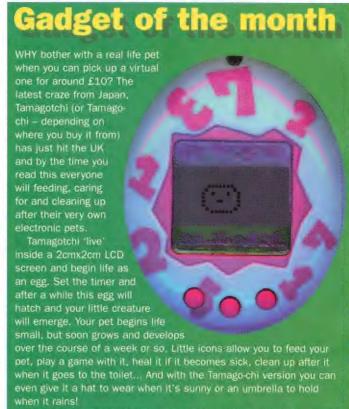
Mitsubishi Galant, tips about off-road driving with the Shogun, a dealer search system, plus news about special offers and

The site also offers a free screensaver which when downloaded allows you to enter into the competition for the rally drive. The screensaver features the rally car it motors across your screen.



going through its paces as Motor around with the free Mitsubishi screensaver

The company is claiming a remarkable response to its site with weekly accesses at over 23,000. Speed over to the site at http://www.mitsubishi-



10 million Tamagotchi have been sold in Japan in less than a year, and the craze is already taking off in America. We've had some virtual pets here in the office for a while now, and any mistakes you find in this issue will probably be down to someone having to stop work to look after their little creature! It's compulsive stuff.

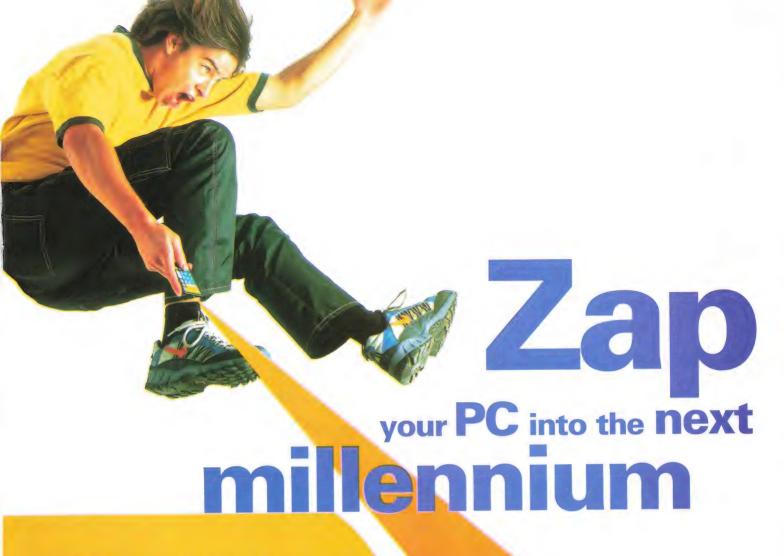
Tamago-chi (currently only available as chicks, but with pups and hedgehogs due soon) are available from Alex Jardine on 01444 415039. The Web site is at http://www.tamago-chl.com Tamagotchi (whose appearance as they grow is dependent on how you treat them) are from Bandal on 01489 790944. The Web site is



LEGEND Entertainment has recently announced that it's developing its latest adventure game using Epic Megagame's Unreal 3-D engine.

The Wheel of Time is the name of the game and it is based on the bestselling fantasy series of novels by Robert Jordan. It's touted as an action/strategy game with a healthy dose of RPG elements.

For those who are familiar with Jordan's work, the game takes place sometime before his first book The Eye of the World. Here are a couple of screen shots to whet your appetite. They are somewhat unpopulated but you can be sure there will be plenty of denizens waiting for you when it's released. No date as of yet but you can visit Legend's Web site at http://www.legendent.com



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Together with Blaster iNFRA™ remote, a credit card size remote controller, the superior technology of this CD-ROM drive will give you unprecedented remote control power. You can surf the Web and give PC presentations without using your mouse, for a start.

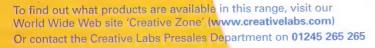
What's more, the Blaster CD iNFRA™ has amazing features such as Speed on Demand, Voice Read, Auto Speed Selection for Video CDs and Enhanced Autoplay capability.

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you are invited to step through the door to a philosophical adventure spanning 3,000 years

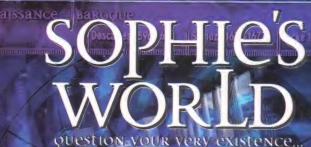
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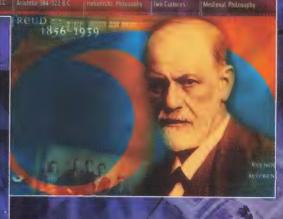
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- Access the reference band and philosophy map for enlightening information to help you on your way
- Participate in a virtual mystery and solve the very mysteries of existence!

for more information call 0345 697008



SIET

Renaissance Discoveries

The Statue

Barogue Illusion

**MACMILLAN INTERACTIVE PUBLISHING** 

## GIBLET TIME

A FEW noteworthy happenings this month, not the least of which was the release of eight or so Quake II screenshots (you can see a couple of them in the Most Wanted section of the Home Front). News has also emerged that Duke Nukem Forever, the sequel to Duke, will use the Quake II engine.

For those of you into Quake bots, a new public beta of the Oak

http://web.ukonline.co.uk/neil.henderson/index.htm. It's still at an early stage, and a bit, well, er, stupid at the moment. A couple of guys from Rayen are also working on a new bot, Rayenbot, which may be designed for Hexen II.

Finally, John Romero has fallen again, getting whupped by Kornelia of Clan 311 at a big tourney. When I met him he was enthusing about the merits of Blood... perhaps it's time to practice that Quake game again, John.

#### UKCL

Well, it's been kind of a happening time for the UKCL, matches on the last two weekends have been (modemers only clan war) has been merged with on one league) has also become ever expanding

Clan	Played	Wes	Ovince	Land	Fat	Against	France
Quake Police Dept	10	10	Ů.	0	1835	704	1131
Quake Lords	9.	9	0	0	1388	609	699
Cix	11	9	0	2	1696	875	821
Frag Kings	9	8	0	1	1506	557	949
Clan Corpus	9	7	0	2	1594	1123	471
Demonic Core	9	6	0	3	1472	673	799
Clan Pendragon	10	6	0	3	1171	794	377
Clan Nasty	9	6	0	3	1029	794	235
Mandalore Wattiors	10	6	0	1	1384	1417	-33
Weedkillers	10	6	0	•	1283	1402	-119
TFS	11	6	0	5	1437	1376	61
Minos Academy	10	5	0	5	993	1122	129
The X	10		0	6	1311	1401	-90
The Desperades	9	1	0	6	706	1184	478
QUTA	10	3	0	7	598	909	311
Vengeance	9	2	0	7	1001	1403	402
Bog	9	2	0	7	421	1621	-1200
Riders of Telgar Weyr	9		n	6	538	1331	793

UKCL league page has a new home at http://quake.perfect.co.uk/ukcl/

On the results front, the QPD and QL remain undefeated... it'll two losses, along with the Frag Kings who were dealt a controversial defeat by The Desperados (who had a "guest" player apparently). An enquiry is pending...

## **Blizzard goes adventuring**

FANS of that fine real-time strategy game, Warcraft, can now expect to go adventuring in the next game to be released by Blizzard Entertainment. Warcraft Adventures: Lord of the Clans picks up where Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal ended and will develop many of the characters first introduced in the real-time strategy series.

Some of the features to look forward to in the game include intense puzzles and extensive character interaction, over 70 animated characters, more than 40,000 frames of animation created by a team of over 50 artists plus voice-overs from actors whose credits include Highlander and Disney's Hunchback of Notre Dame.

## CorelDRAW

## comes Home

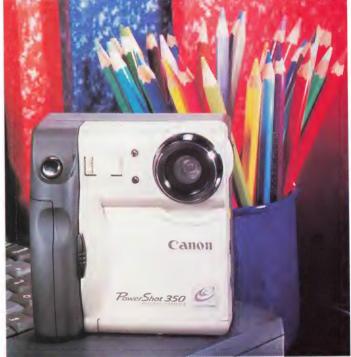
NEXT month's PC Home will contain something extra special on its coverdisc - CorelDRAW 3, the world's best selling drawing package. This isn't merely a cut down version or a demo, but the full commercial package. That's right, the full thing. Cool eh?

We're expecting the issue to sell like hot cakes so reserve your copy now or



Get the full working package free with next month's PC Home

better yet why not subscribe? The details are on page 18. If you can't wait to find out more about this superb give-away why not turn to the Coming Next Month page at the back of this issue?



A pocket sized offering from Canon – the PowerShot 350

#### anon Fires PowerShot

CANON has introduced its latest Digital Camera, the PowerShot 350, into the UK. At just 90mmx95mm and weighing just under 11 ounces, the company claims the camera is truly pocket-sized.

It comes complete with a 2Mb removable CompactFlash memory card, capable of storing up to 47 images - this can be expanded to either 94 or 352 images with 4Mb and 15Mb cards respectively.

The PowerShot features a 3cm macro-focusing facility which allegedly "allows the user to take high quality pictures even up close". It also comes complete with Canon's Time Tunnel, image browser and 'Stitch' software, which joins two photographs together into one image. For more information fire your enquiries over to Canon on 0121 680 8062.

The ideal joystick should give you fast response, pinpoint accuracy, and

# Interpolation and the games

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www.gravis.com



| coming for the Cast contact |

and the second s



Be one of those magnificent men in their flying machines in Red Baron II

## Return of the Red Baron

SIERRA is soon to release the sequel to the acclaimed Red Baron, with the blindingly original moniker of Red Baron II.

The game will see you pitting your piloting skills against all manner of German and Allied pilots. Expect dogfights aplenty and edge of the seat thrills as you as you take to the skies in your ever so frail vintage plane.

Apparently "over 35,000 man hours of art, programming, design and research have gone into the development of Red Baron II" with the developers Dynamix claiming that the sequel is "well on its way to becoming the best combat flight simulation ever seen for the personal computer".

Whether Sierra's Red Baron II will emerge victorious in the dogfight with Empire's excellent Flying Corps remains to be seen. Watch the skies when Red Baron Il swoops onto the PC soon.

#### **Most wanted**



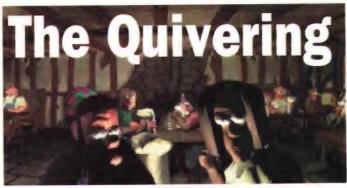
Woah! Check out the detail and the rather smart looking scary monster



Hmm... this is one we're looking forward to at PC Home

HERE they are, the first "real" shots of Quake 2. As you may have guessed from the resolution, it's GL Quake 2, and rather splendid it looks too.

Actual details on the game are very sparse, but one point that has emerged from the tight lips at id is that there will be a proper plot, and what actions you take on earlier levels will effect what happens in the game later on. The projected release date is December 97. And we can't wait for it!



Oooh, I'm all a-quiver, etc. etc.

ALTERNATIVE Software is developing what it calls a "terrifying 3-D horror adventure." The Quivering is set to incorporate black parodies of famous horror stories and a suitably sinister plot. The game's all about an evil force led by a certain Big D entering our universe by a dimension gate and trying

It will feature a 360 degree explorable environment, viewed from the first person perspective, along with animated cut scenes to relate the horrific events of the plot. Look out for it sometime this summer - ring Alternative on 01977 797777.



Will FIFA Soccer Manager give the other football management games a run for

## **FIFA Signs** New Manager

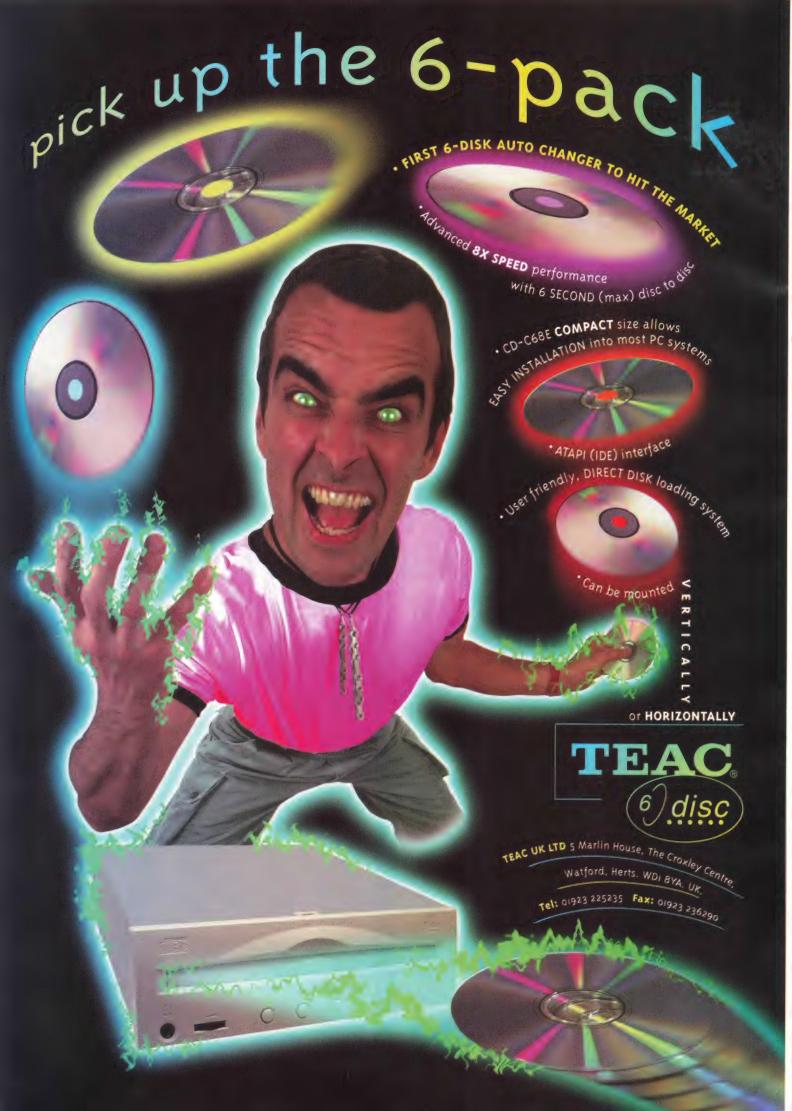
IT had to happen really. EA, champion of all things sporty, has taken its footy game prowess and turned its hand to football management.

The game, which has been officially endorsed by FIFA, features all the divisions from five European leagues - England, Italy, Scotland, France and Germany and actual stadium representations of all the featured clubs.

FIFA Soccer Manager promises state of the art artificial intelligence and features accurate statistics on over 7,500 players, rated in 29 skill categories. Add to this the latest squad info and player data and EA is confident that FIFA Soccer Manager will be "the most realistic portrayal to date" of the trials and tribulations faced by the likes of Fergie, Dalglish, Evans and co.

Football's a game of two halves, so if they take each game as it comes then FIFA may just walk away with the title when it hits the streets this summer. For more info ring the EA boot room on 01753 549442.





#### **Snippets**

IF you want to know if it's White Stilletto and Dance Around your Handbag Night at the Ritz, Grab a Granny Night at the Hippodrome or Big Boy Night at the Blue Oyster Bar then you might want to dance over to http://www.Clubit. com. The site claims to give you the lowdown on the UK's best clubs, telling you about to get cut price tickets.

INTEL has produced a new sound specification, called AC '97, which is aimed at guiding hardware companies away in 1998. The AC '97 spec supports both analogue and digital sound and supports various interfaces including PCI, USB and 1394. Creative Labs and Yamaha have both pledged their support for the new

company's forthcoming releases and the usua demos. The site also boasts a Retro Games section where 8-bit fans can swat up on Gremlin's history and even download such ageing Point your browser at http://www.gremlin.co.uk

thrilled to hear that there is now an official Peter Rabbit http://www.peterrabbit.co.u k The site contains information on forthcoming merchandise, a biography of interactive games and



Try and stay on the grey thing, and not hit any of the big blocky cubes to the side

#### Manx T

MOTORBIKE nuts will be quite pleased to hear that Psygnosis is planning a game based on the tough Manx TT races. Four courses are planned, big ones naturally, with a final dead hard super-bike race to undertake once you've completed them.

There will be a two player mode, as well as an eight player IPX network mode, with time trials to practice the courses. The game will be written to support 3Dfx graphics accelerators. Burn up to Pysgnosis on 0151 282 3000 to find out more.

## **Empire** flying high

FA-18 Hornet is the latest flight & fight sim soon to be released by Empire Interactive. It's firmly aimed at the purists amongst the flight sim fraternity with a heavy emphasis on realistic handling. The FA-18 Hornet team has striven to provide the most accurate flight dynamics possible for the game and enemy pilot Al is also rumoured to be very good

The 3-D engine may not be as visually impressive as other heavily textured games on the market but if our brief play with the game is anything to go by, you can be sure of ultra smooth and very realistic motion.

The game designers say that 20 frames per second and greater can be achieved even in 1024x768 resolutions.

Expect FA-18 Hornet to appear sometime in July. You can contact Empire Interactive on 0181 343 7337. You can also find it on the Web at http://www.empire. co.uk.



Prey might well be a bit of a looker

## We've got to Prey

SOME more screenshots have been released for Prey, so you can get an idea of what it might look like eventually. Check out

http://www.3drealms.com/catalog/prey/preyupd.html. 3D Realms is sticking to the "it'll be done when it's done" philosophy, predictably enough.

1	X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER	VIRGIN
2	THEME HOSPITAL	ELECTRONIC ARTS
3	PREMIER MANAGER 97	GREMLIN INTERACTIVE
4	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 96/97	EIDOS INTERACTIVE
5	COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT	INTERPLAY
6	TOMB RAIDER	EIDOS SOFTWARE
7	MDK	INTERPLAY
8	ENCARTA 97	MICROSOFT
9	DUKE NUKEM ATOMIC	EIDOS INTERACTIVE
10	FLIGHT SIMULATOR 6	MICROSOFT
11	NEED FOR SPEED	ELECTRONIC ARTS
12	FIFA 97	ELECTRONIC ARTS
13	RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	EUROPRESS SOFTWARE
14	FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2	MICROPROSE
15	VOICE TYPE	IBM
16	WORMS UNITED	OCEAN
17	MOTO RACER	ELECTRONIC ARTS
18	GCSE MATHS	EUROPRESS
19	QUICKEN V6 DELUXE	INTUIT LTD
20	TAXCALC 96/97	WHICH? SOFTWARE



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#### **ENCARTA 97 COMPO**

#### Encarta 97 can be updated monthly using what?

- O The Internet
- O Carrier Pigeon
- O Snail Mail

#### How old will Encarta be this August?

- O 1 year
- O 5 years
- O 135 years

#### How many articles does Encarta 97 contain?

- O 17
- O 200
- O 28,000

Name

Address

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Send your entries to: PC Home, Encarta competition, IDG, PO Box 2, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L65 3EA. Rules and regulations are available on request. The editor's decision is final Closing date for the competition is 12 July.

Tick if you do not wish to receive promotional literature from other companies

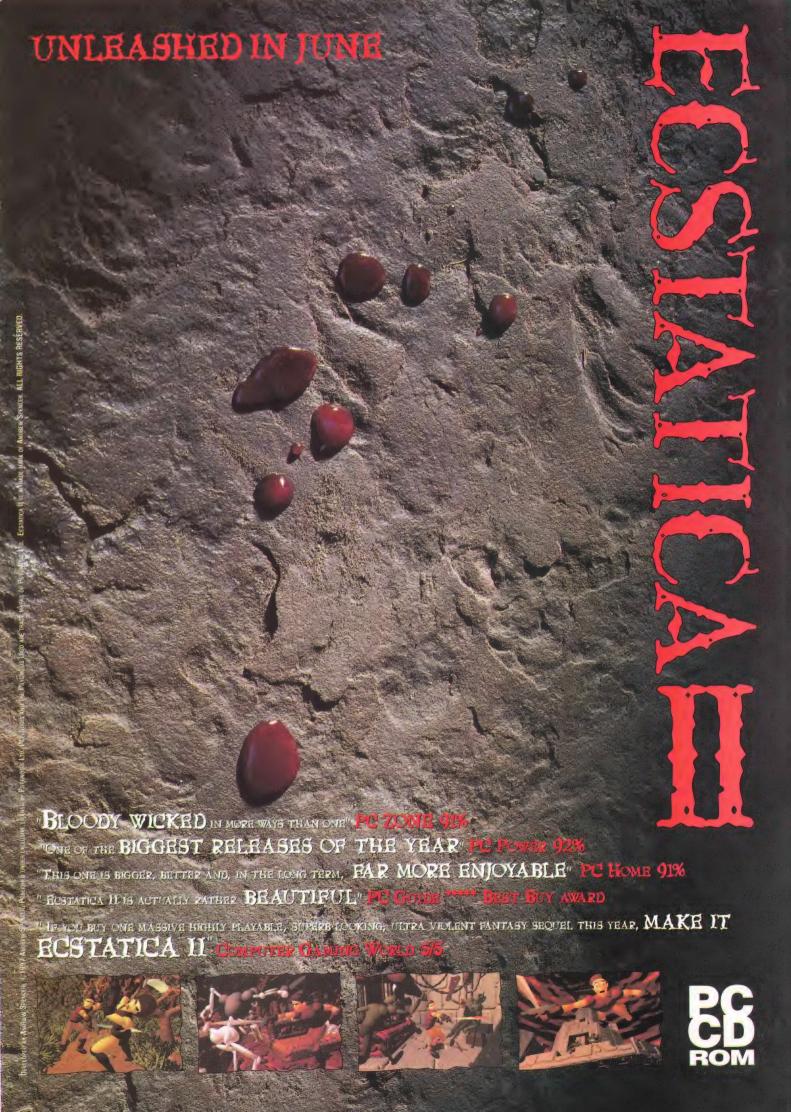
HIS month we're offering a fantastic prize for 50 PC Home readers - a copy of the UK's best-selling multimedia on CD-Rom - Microsoft Encarta 97 World English Edition, worth £49.99.

Now with monthly updates available over the Internet, Encarta 97 Encyclopedia is the most up-to-date and comprehensive encyclopedia around. Designed especially for the UK, the 1997 World English Edition contains more than 28,000 articles, plus over 8,000 unique photos and illustrations, more than 100 videos and animations, over 900 maps and more than 3,000 audio clips.

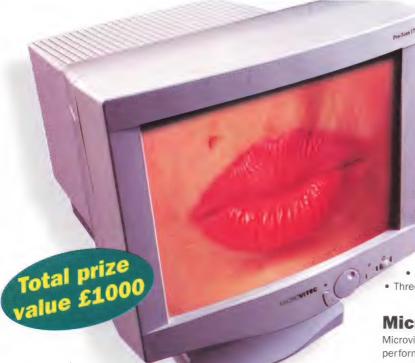
For those who are looking for even more fun and information, Encarta also contains numerous interactive features and games and over 2,000 links to related sites on the World Wide Web.

Encarta brings a world of information to life for all the family - it's ideal for children following the National Curriculum or higher level studies and it's also an essential reference source for all the family, helping you to find out about whatever you need to know.

So what do you have to do to be in with a chance of winning a copy of Encarta? Just answer the three simple multiple choice questions, cut out the coupon, stick it in an envelope addressed to Encarta Competition, IDG, PO Box 2, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L65 3EA, post it off and keep your fingers crossed! Entries to arrive no later than 12 July please.



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- O Microfilter
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Closing date for the competition is 12 July.

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ITTLE monitors are all very well but, as with TVs. you can't truly experience your PC properly until you've seen it on a big screen. Now I know what you're thinking. Your thoughts are: "This is all very well, but these things don't come cheap you know." We know. That's why we've arranged for those kind hearted folk at Microvitec to donate two super duper Pro-Scan 17SX monitors to two lucky PC Home reading charity cases.

All you have to do is scrutinise this page until you feel you know Microvitec and its monitors inside out. Then answer the three questions, fill out the form and send it to us, in an envelope. Two winners, drawn at random by our quiz master, will both receive a Pro-Scan 17SX for their efforts. Entries to arrive no later than 12 July please.

# Internet H.L.



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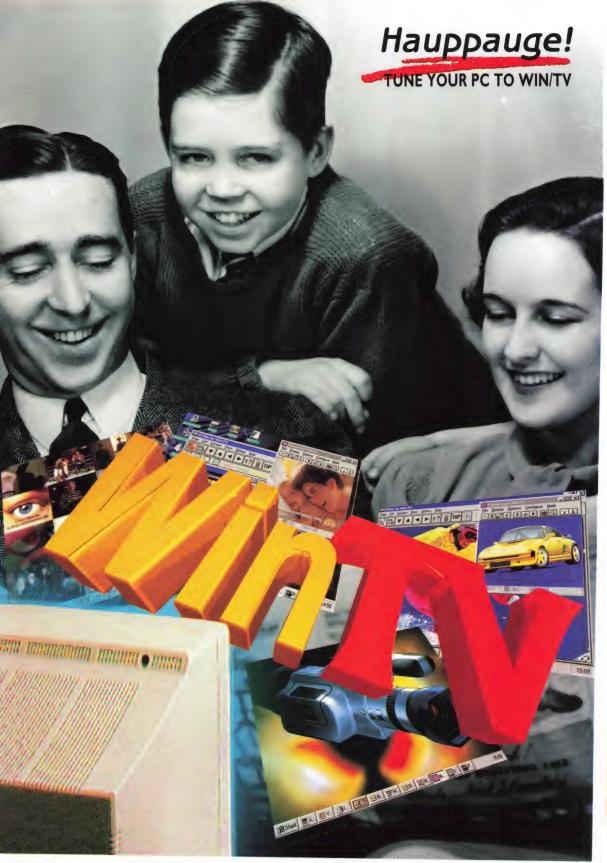
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"Win /TV brings the family closer. Closer to the PC, anyway.

Quite frankly, anything that shuts the wrinklies up for a few minutes is a Godsend. In fact Dad's showing so much interest in the PC now he might even buy me some decent software for it. Not bad for someone who calls a CD player a 'gramophone'. And now Mum

can watch Neighbours while Dad checks out the sports results on the computer, there's less 'Why do you spend so much time on the wretched thing'. Of course I could dazzle them with Hauppauge's serious video editing facilities too, but we don't want to confuse the poor dears too much, do we?"

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- Professional Teletext with Print, Save and Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE)
- PCI bus architecture supporting resolutions up to 1024x768
- Easy Windows 95 Plug & Play installation
- Compatible with high end video cards supporting Microsoft's Direct Draw drivers
- No cables to VGA card required
- Captures pictures to your PC
- Captures AVI clips at 25 fps



### WIN/TV Pci

- 122 Channel Cable ready TV tuner
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- Compatible with high end video cards supporting Microsoft's Direct Draw drivers
- No cables to VGA card required
- Captures pictures to your PC
- Captures AVI clips at 25 fps
- FM Stereo Radio



#### WIN/TV primio

- 122 Channel Cable ready TV tuner
- PCI bus architecture supporting resolutions up to 1024x768
- Easy Windows 95 Plug & Play installation
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- No cables to VGA card required
- Captures pictures to your PC
- Captures AVI clips at 25 fps



#### Video Magic

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# Profiteer

Soar out of the red and into the black with PC Home's guide to making money with your PC. Jason Holborn reveals the entrepreneurial secrets that could make you rich...

ONEY – you've either got it or you haven't. And, for most of us at least, it's definitely a case of the latter. Money might well be the root of all evil but, like the food we eat and the air we breathe, we just

Fact is, most of us spend our entire lives working hard just to pay the next set of bills in a continuing cycle that only seems to end when we kick the proverbial bucket. Life needn't be a constant battle to stay out of the red, though — with nothing more than your PC and a little bit of ambition, you too could be living the life of Riley...

Few PC owners realise the money making potential that the PC has to offer. Although most of us will probably never reach the lofty entrepreneurial heights achieved by the likes of Richard Branson, even a little bit of extra cash now and then is always good news. You don't need to be blessed with Dickie Branson's head for business (or silly beard) to make your PC business work – just a little bit of common sense and commitment is all that's needed. Whether you're hoping to make your first million or just planning to cover next month's mortgage payment, there's a multitude of different ways that you can make your PC earn.

Over the next five pages you'll find some of the best tried 'n' tested PC business opportunities, most of which require very little outlay to get up and running. Obviously some of the opportunities we'll be looking at are more involved than others but – like most things in life – the more you put in, the more you get out.

There's no limit on the scale of your PC business, either, as most of the opportunities we'll be looking at could be run either as a full-scale business or as little more than a money-spinning hobby. Either way, you'll be amazed at just how profitable owning a PC can be...

# Mon

Make your first million with our guide to the best PC business opportunities

EW applications come close to the money-making potential that desktop publishing offers. Armed with nothing more than a DTP program and a low-cost laser printer, there's serious money to be made from a wide range of print and design services. You don't need to be a particularly talented designer, either - with modern

> (0115 9421502) automating more and more of the design process,

DTP programs like

PagePlus 4.0 from Serif



Put a half-decent colour inkjet to work in your PC business and you've got a license to print money... not literally, of course, 'cause that's illegal

anyone with a modicum of design sense and an eye for what looks good can become a professional desktop publisher.

One good example of putting DTP software to use is a Curriculum Vitae preparation service. With the possibility of being unemployed still a very real threat to many, having an effective CV is vital. Most CVs tend to look rather amateur so there's plenty of scope for a service that transforms a dowdy CV into one that gets results.

The best way to run a CV preparation service is to sit down with the client and

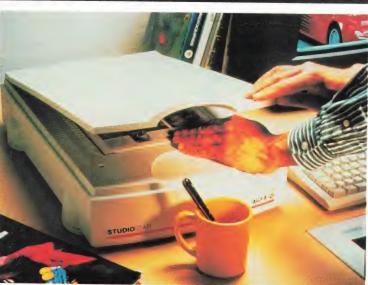
#### Photo Finish

EVERYONE loves looking at photographs - whether it's snaps of the kids playing in the garden or last year's holiday, nothing captures the moment better than a photo. Problem is, photos are rather fragile things and it doesn't take long before they become dog-eared and generally worse for wear. Bearing in mind that most of us don't hang on to the negatives, what do you do when a treasured picture is in desperate need of attention? Easy - you use a photo restoration service.

If you've already got a colour flatbed scanner and a half-decent colour inkjet printer, you've got the necessary equipment to start up your own photo restoration business. When a customer supplies you with a photo that needs restoring, you simply scan it into your PC, clean it up in an image processing program (Adobe Photoshop is best for this sort of thing), print it out and et voila - one restored

Kodak already runs a similar service in many of its photo centres but the one thing that the Kodak service doesn't offer is photo retouching so any blemishes on the original photo aren't removed. Be sure to play up this advantage if you wish to compete.

With the right software, you can also offer a photo enhancement service by removing unwanted objects (or people!) from photos, recolouring faded snaps, adding colour to black and white photos and so on. Another good idea is to offer a scanning service to other PC users where - for a small fee - you scan in their images and give them back on a PC disk in the format of their choice.



Flatbed scanners can be used for a wide range of money-making schemes including a photo restoration service

go through their existing CV (if they have one) to ensure that it contains the right information. Most people still don't know how to structure a good CV so this initial consultation stage is allimportant.

Once you've got all the necessary information (and the client has checked that each fact is correct), you can use a desktop publishing program to lay out the CV on your PC. When complete, the resulting CV is printed out and given to the client. Remember to hold the CV on file, though, as they often need to be updated

It might seem hard to believe, but students are another good source of income. Although many have their own computers these days, there are still a large number that need a high quality printing service for dissertations, reports and end of term theses. Don't expect it to be easy money, though, as you'll probably have to key in the student's work from hand-written sheets. Bear in mind too that students don't have a lot of money so keep your prices low if you want to attract custom. Even then, your main competitor will still be the student bar...

Last but not least, don't forget that there are plenty of PC owners out there that can't afford a flashy printer but still need to output work onto paper. As a sideline, why not offer a high quality print service other PC users? If you own a photo-realistic colour inkjet like the Canon BJC-4200, you could even extend the printing service to include full colour printing.

#### **Get the facts**

STARTING any business can be a daunting prospect so it pays to get the right advice. Worth investigating, therefore, is the excellent book Making Money With for £12.95 from Capall Bann Publishing (01635 46455). Also worth checking out is Make Your PC Earn from Gower Publishing more pocket-wrenching £14.95.

#### Also worth a try...

PhotoCD Service - If you've got a CD writer and a flatbed scanner, scan in a customer's snaps and cut them onto a CD

Route Planning - Buy a copy of AutoRoute Express from Microsoft (0345 002000) and offer a route planning service to motorists and any businesses that need to make UK-wide deliveries.

Dating Agency – Use a database like Microsoft Access to run your own dating Agency.

> Accountancy - Get your hands on a package like QuickBooks from Intuit (01932 578500) and offer a bookkeeping service to the self-employed.



Modern desktop publishing programs let you knock up classy-looking stationery in no time at all

#### Stationery with style

ANOTHER sound business idea is a stationery design service. Many businesses, clubs and individuals need personalised stationery, and this can be expensive to produce through conventional printing bureaux. As your home-based business has none of the overheads that these bureaux have to absorb, you can undercut them quite substantially by designing letter heads, compliment slips, invoices and business cards on your PC.

If your customer wants you to mass-produce the stationary, don't try to handle all the printing yourself - not only will your costs escalate, but your printer almost certainly won't be able to take the pressure. Instead, use your laser printer purely for producing camera-ready artwork and subcontract the bulk printing to a local printing firm. Not only will it reduce the strain on your own printer but it'll work out substantially cheaper too...



#### **Fashion Statement**

LOOK in anyone's wardrobe and chances are you'll find at least one T-shirt in there somewhere. The common T-shirt is still one of the most popular fashion items you can own. Not surprisingly, there's money to be made from the T-shirt's popularity by starting up a T-shirt design service - all you need is your PC, a colour inkjet printer and a bank account capable of taking the strain of all that extra income...

The great thing about such a service is that you don't even have to think of some pretty designs to print on your T-shirts. Instead, you can offer a service where the customers produce their own designs - all you do is reproduce the designs your given using a program like CorelDRAW and then print them out and iron them onto a plain T-shirt. Most inkjets support T-shirt printing using special paper - If you own a Canon (0181 773 3173) inkjet, for example, you can buy a pack of ten sheets of special TR-101 transfer material for about £14.

Also worth looking into is a sign-cutting business. Computer-controlled sign cutters work a bit like pen plotter printers. Instead of dragging a coloured pen across paper, however, they use very sharp blades that cut out your designs from sheets of sticky-backed plastic. Designs can be created using just about any drawing program (CorelDRAW, for example) that supports the HP-GL standard. Although the initial cost of the hardware is high (expect to pay around £1200 for an entry-level sign cutter), there are plenty of businesses and individuals that need custom-designed signs.

This little beauty from Summagraphics might cost and arm and a leg, but cheaper sign-cutters can be picked up for just over a grand

# 

### Advanced Printing Tools For Windows

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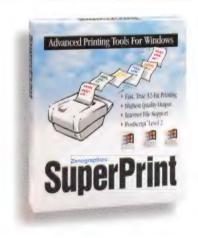
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Versions of SuperPrint are available for large-format, thermal and dye-sublimation printers, and film recorders.

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Available from - Gem Distribution - Software Warehouse - Misco - HCS Global.







Spending all day with your head inside a PC might not be everyone's cup of tea but there's serious money to be made from such a service

#### **Bookie beater**

GAMBLING might not seem the most likely way of making money from your PC but there's a lot your machine can do to increase your chances of striking it rich. Take horse racing, for example. Although, like other forms of gambling, horse racing is a game of chance, there are constants that effect the outcome - the previous form of each horse and jockey, the going of the ground, the stake and so on. Using the fantastic number crunching abilities of your PC, horse racing prediction programs like The Tipster from Sidmouth Software (01404 814547) can predict the outcome of races with a surprisingly level of accuracy.

Then, of course, there's the National Lottery. Although the lottery results are completely random, some numbers (the number 16, for example) pops up with surprising regularity. Most Lottery prediction programs not only let you analyse the results of the lottery but also manage the smooth running of a lottery syndicate. You could even use your PC to manage other syndicates and charge them on a commission basis - 10 per cent of any winnings, for example.



Gambling might normally be a mug's game but not if you've got the right software!

in your local newspaper offering these

people the benefits of your knowledge?

You could offer a service where, for a

small charge, you visit the customer and

sort out their PC problems in their own

#### Chip shop

IF you know your VX from your HX and you can talk about clock multipliers in your sleep, then why not set up your own PC upgrade service? Fact is, there are literally thousands of 486 PC users out there that would love to own a Pentium but just can't afford to buy a whole new machine but would almost certainly jump at the chance of having their existing system upgraded. For as little as £200, you could transform their tired 486 into a slick Pentium system - and make a tidy profit in the process.

You could even extend the service by selling other PC upgrades such as faster CD-Rom drives, better sound cards, larger monitors and then some. Always shop around for your parts, though, as the price of things like motherboards and memory fluctuates so much that you may well find that the bargain price you paid one week is overpriced the next. Bear in mind that your customers will expect a warranty too, so always hang on to those receipts so you can return faulty parts to your supplier.

#### Shareware

homes.

SELLING shareware was all the rage a couple of years back but the market became so crowded that it was almost impossible to make any real money. Certainly there's very little demand for selling shareware on floppy disk but shareware CD-Roms are still selling well. Obviously you'll need to invest in a CD Writer to enter the market but with CD-R drives now selling for as little as £300 - there's never been a better time to buy.

If you want to stand out from the crowd, don't just throw hundreds of unrelated programs onto a CD. Instead, one very good way of attracting interest is to produce themed CD-Roms - that is, discs which contain software that has a common theme. You could, for example, produce your own shareware Quake expansion pack containing lots of useful Quake utilities and maps. Or, for the more serious PC user, why not produce a collection of shareware office tools?



"Yeah, that's right - stick your widget up the back of your doobrie and you'll be laughing. By the way, that'll be £20 please mate

#### Advice line

KNOWLEDGE has always been a very saleable commodity and that's particularly true of PC technical know-how. If you know your bits from your bytes and are on first name terms with the Windows API then there are plenty of businesses that will pay good money for your assistance.

PC networking knowledge is particularly saleable at the moment, especially if you're a dab hand with Novell Netware or Windows NT Server. The best way of getting consultancy work is to mail shot small businesses with a leaflet giving details of your ser-

Don't forget too that there are many home PC users out there that almost certainly won't understand the PC as well as you do. Why not place an advertisement With the price of CDR drives dropping faster than a lead balloon with a rocket strapped to it, there's never been a better time to master your own CDs

# Net profit

#### Forget Europe - the Internet is the biggest open market ever. We show you how to cash in on it

HILE the politicians continue to bicker over the future of Britain in the European Community, another multinational community is already providing rich pickings for businesses switched on enough to take advantage of it.

In little more than five years, the



Net advertising might be a pain to the casual Web surfer but it can be a genuine money spinner for you

Internet has transformed from an exclusive club for scientists and computer geeks to a thriving centre of electronic commerce offering the sort of earning potential guaranteed to bring a smile to the face of even the most jaded economist. The potential to make money from the Internet isn't just restricted to the big corporates, though - with the right ideas and a little know-how, you too can grab a piece of action.

If you run your own Web site, for example, net advertising can be a good source of income. Providing your site attracts enough regular visitors, there are plenty of companies out there that will pay good money to advertise their products or services on your site.

Themed sites are a particular favourite amongst Net advertisers as they tend to attract visitors that share a common interest - if you run a Quake site, for example, then you can safely assume that your visitors are Quake fans.

Advertisers like this sort of clear-cut visitor profile as it allows them to advertise products most likely to appeal to that group of users - a Quake site, for example, would be more likely to attract advertisements from companies that sell Quake-related products rather than more mainstream items like clothing, books and so on.

If you already run a popular site, you

#### Also worth a try...

E-mail Hosting – Set yourself up as an e-mail post office by sending and receiving e-mails on other people's

Direct Selling - Advertise and sell products such as computer parts, mobile phones, consumer electronics and even designer fashions to Net users.

Web Design – Put your HTML skills to work by designing entire Web sites for other businesses.

Net Consultancy - If you're bit of a Net aficionado, then why not offer your services as an Internet consultant to local businesses?

may find that net advertisers will approach you (usually by e-mail) but it doesn't hurt to contact a few companies yourself if no one comes knocking at your door. Once again, the key is to identify companies that sell products or services most likely to appeal to your visitors. When you've found a likely candidate, e-mail them details of your site - the number of hits you receive per month, the type of user that visits your site and so on.

How much you make from a Net advertisement depends entirely upon how successful the advertisement proves to be as most net advertisers pay a 'per hit' charge (that is, how many people are redirected to their site via your site). Although you'll only get about 5p per hit, they soon mount up!

#### **Tourist information**

IF you're a dab hand with HTML, Web authoring is another good way of making money from the Internet. Fact is, there are probably plenty of businesses in your local area that would love to be on the Net but don't have either the money or expertise to host their own site. So who do they turn to? You, of course!

Don't assume that it's just the multinational corporations that need to be on the Net either – in truth, any company that trades in an area that attracts tourists stands to gain from having a net presence. The trick is to start by building a Web site about your local area that will be of interest to potential visitors.

If you live in a small town, for example, why not build a Web site that gives potential visitors an insight in the town's history, places of interest and so on? Not only will you be providing a service to potential visitors but you'll also be delivering a very saleable commodity - a large number (hopefully) of potential tourists with money to spend.

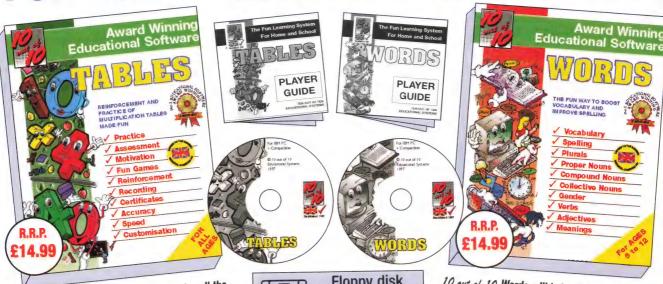
Once these foundations are in place, you can then sell space on your site to local businesses. Tourists often want to know the location of local shops and services before they travel so it's a good idea to target businesses most likely to benefit from tourism - restaurants, florists, newsagents, supermarkets and so on. As you're dealing with small businesses, don't set your prices too high - remember that it's better to have 20 companies paying you £10 per month than five companies paying £20...



Sites that provide tourists with information about the area where you live can be a real money spinner as many local businesses will want to be part of the action

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The Times Educational Supplement.

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## Make son

Using your PC to sample, edit and arrange digital audio has never been easier. So where do you start? Neil Jones finds out

#### Sourcing the Sounds

BEFORE you can start constructing your tunes you need to get some sounds to play around with. Sample CDs, produced by companies like Time & Space, are the obvious first choice. They provide a reservoir of snippets for PC musicians and are incredibly convenient.

Another option is to synthesise your own sounds. Good synthesisers can be expensive, but there are an increasing number of PC based software synthesisers that can produce some very interesting effects:

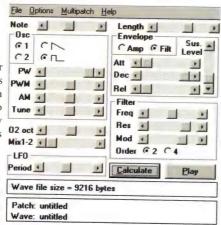
#### SubSynth

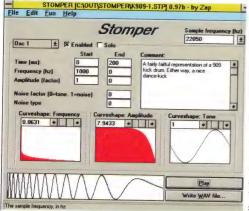
http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/ ~martin-s/

SUBSYNTH is a shareware synthesiser program for Windows that generates wave (.wav) files. The registered version (a very reasonable £12) allows users to produce multisamples by progressively changing parameters to generate a series of wave files of sweeps and warbles.

Fat (or should that be phat?) sounding bass and drum noises with STOMPER

Twiddle, tweak and adjust to create just the right sound





http://www.lysator.liu.se/ ~zap/stomper.html

STOMPER synthesises drum-like sounds to use in your own pumping tunes. This is probably the simplest of the packages - it has few whistles and bells- but it can produce some fantastic sounding 'whoops' and 'booms'. You can't add any special effects and you can't sequence the drum sounds into a Pattern or Loop, this just gives you the actual sounds to work with.

AKING great records no longer means multi-million pound studios in Kent. The technology is becoming increasingly affordable for home PC users, and cheap(ish) digital audio equipment - sequencers, samplers and synths (or hybrids thereof) - are being used to create many of the today's top

The point is that the technology you have sitting on your desktop could be banging out the next top 20 hit – anything is possible. You won't even need to spend a fortune on new equipment either, take solace in the fact that there will always be the potential to make a block rockin' masterpiece with a coat hanger, two pieces of string and some chewing gum. (Recent hits such as Robert Miles's 'Children' and White Town's 'Abort, Retry, Fail' were actually produced on budgets so small, they couldn't even afford the gum!).

#### **Funky Drummer**

DRUM Loop sample CDs are, with good reason, probably the most popular sample CDs around and it may at first seem obvious how to use them, after all many of them are created to loop anyway. Drum loops however, don't have to be played at their original tempo. You may choose to adjust the tempo to fit the mood of your tune using one of two methods: time stretching or pitch adjusting.

Time stretching is more involved of the two, but try using these formulae to calculate the required length of the loop in time with a given tempo:

To convert Beats Per Minute (BPM) to Loop Length in Seconds:

BPM divided by 8 (2 bars of 4/4 time) =n

60 divided by n = Loop Length in Seconds

To convert Loop Length in Seconds to Beats Per Minute:

60 divided by Loop Length in Seconds = n

n x 8 or 6 (assuming 2 bars) = BPM

Tools like ReCycle from Steinberg, which automate this process, have received much critical acclaim but increase costs. A far simpler, though considerably less flexible method of changing tempo is to adjust the pitch of the loop. Many packages will offer the ability to alter the pitch but this does alter the sound and can leave your original sample sounding somewhat distorted.



#### **Edit and Sequence**

OKAY, so you have your digital audio data now you want to play around with it and sequence or arrange them into something that at least resembles a tune. If you're of the Philip Glass school of musical thought, then simply cut and paste your loops one after the other several hundred times.

Top of the shareware digital audio editing software is Cool Edit 96 from Syntillium software (http://www.syntrillium.com.) Cool Edit is great for editing, chopping converting and looping your samples, and also gives you a wide variety of special effects to "touch up" your sounds.

It really can do an awful lot, and for a paltry \$50 registration, you can have a piece of software that is as feature packed as many of the hideously expensive Pro-audio pieces. If you absolutely insist on spending big bucks, then a sound editing package like Sound Forge 4.0 (http://www.sonicfoundry.com) with many improved features and professional audio editing facilities, may be for you. But at around \$500, I think that Cool Edit 96 is more than adequate for our needs.



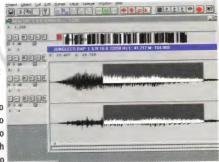
Sequencing and arranging these loops is worthy of a feature in itself, but a brief mention of some of the software available won't go a miss.

Cubasis Audio from Steinberg is a basic sequencing package that allows you to arrange MIDI and digital audio, up to four tracks of stereo digital audio in fact. It also allows you to edit your samples non-destructively, meaning any changes you make to the samples in your arrangement won't affect the original source sample. It also has some basic audio processing as well such as normalise and reverse (most of your audio editing is probably best done in Cool Edit however).

Samplitude from Evolution (http://www.evolution.co.uk) is more specifically a Hard Disk recording program, which has many of the above features but also includes a more advanced editing section and a slightly more professional feel. Prices

range from the basic entrylevel package at around £85, up to the studio level at £340

Arrange up to eight stereo digital audio tracks with Samplitude Studio



#### **ReBirth RB-338**

http://www.stienberg.net

ANYONE familiar with nose-bleed techno music will be familiar with the classic analogue sound of the Roland TB-303. Second hand machines are becoming increasingly rare and pricey but novice knob twiddlers needn't fret.

The ReBirth RB-338 distributed by Steinberg is a software recreation of the silver box of delights – it's got pulsing LEDs and everything! – and includes two 303 bass line synthesisers, one analogue drum machine (an 808 if you want the correct terminology), a distortion box and a delay!

The ReBirth RB-338 is currently available as a save-disabled beta version, but the full commercial release (around \$199 that's erm, ...£150) due for release very soon will allow you to export songs and patterns as AIFF or Wave audio files.

You'll need a Pentium (75 MHz minimum). At least 16Mb of ram, Windows 95, and a 16-bit sound card, but by crikey it's worth it.



ACCCCCEEEEEEEEDDDDDDDDDD, analogue purists and computer knob twiddlers of the world unite with ReBirth-338

Of course, you could be a little creative yourself - after all that's what music is all about right? Try connecting a microphone to your machine and getting funky with the pots and pans. The beauty of digital audio is that you can play around with these sounds to your heart's content and make something totally original.

All the big names have stacks of archived sounds, riffs and loops. Techno sample collagists, Future Sound of London, have even sampled Noel Edmonds coughing, speeded it up, and used it as a snare drum on one of their tracks!



Coming soon is Cool Edit Pro (http://www.syntillium.com), a digital audio recorder, editor and mixer based on Cool Edit 96. At around £300 this is no snip but promises a list of high spec features as long as your arm. A fantastic array of audio effects and the ability to edit up to 64 tracks simultaneously, using just about any sound card, with no special hardware.

This looks the business and if Cool Edit is anything to go by then I'm sure we won't be disappointed

> Well there you go. we've given you a taster on how to sample and synthesise your own loops and riffs, and then arrange them into something akin to music. All we ask now is that you send 10 per cent of the royalties from your first hit single to us here at PC Home, Good Luck.

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### Cutting The G

N-LINE time is money, so keeping an eye on your Internet expenditure is an increasingly important issue. So, unless you've more money than sense, why not follow these few simple steps aimed at keeping your Internet expenses in check?

#### 1. Use your Friends and **Family**

Make sure that your connection to your Internet Service Provider (ISP) is a local rate call. It's amazing how many times that number will appear

on your itemised bill, so if you use a BT line why not make the number a Friends and Family number? You'll save an extra 10 per cent on any on-line time. Clever

#### 2. Get a good ISP



If you use the Internet regularly and you're connected to the Web via an ISP or commercial on-line service that charges by the hour - STOP! Move over to

one of the numerous flat-rate offers from ISP's like Netcom, BT or Pipex. Expect to pay around £13 per month for unlimited access, but shop around, many offer free Web space and multiple e-mail addresses.

Commercial services could charge around £6.50 a month including a few

2 2 2 2 2 Welcome to NETCOM

Flat-rate charge and several extras to boot, check them out at http://www.netcom.uk.net hours free on-line time, but anything over this nominal amount and you're looking at around £2 an hour!

Of course, none of these figures include any on-line telephone charges.

#### 3. Upgrade Your Modem



Unless you have a T3 leased line running at 45Mbps, chances are you're familiar with the phenomena of the World Wide Wait. Of course, accessing Web

pages is as much to do with the available bandwidth as your connection, but upgrading your modem at least gives you the best possible chance of fast, efficient browsing.

If you're still using a 14.4Kbps (or god forbid, slower!) modem, you're spending too much time (and money) waiting. Upgrade to at least a 28.8Kbps modem, higher if possible. The new 56K x2 Technology modems offer great speed, but make sure that your ISP does support these new technologies - not all do.

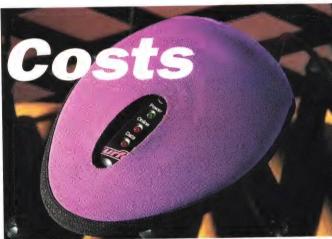
Whatever modem you have, make sure that all the port-settings are set to max in your Modem set up.

#### 4. Keep track of how much time you spend on the Internet



Those late night 'quick-halfhour' Quake sessions can turn into hours before you know it. Keep a careful track on your online time.

Packages like Internet LogMeter (http://www3..sympatico.ca/robert.cote /home.htm) run in the background to monitor your on-line time, providing a **Neil Jones looks at** 15 simple ways of reducing the bills when browsing



readout of your actual session time. You can even set a target time based on a monthly allowance, and it will display your remaining time. NetMeter (free from www.cracker.u-net.com) will display the cost of your call, updating it second by second.

#### 5. Keep tabs on your bookmarks



Using your bookmarks sensibly and logically can really save a lot of time, speeding up access to sites you visit regularly and avoiding having to type in all

those URLs. How you create a bookmark depends on which browser you're using, but whichever you favour, the secret is to organise them. A huge sprawling list of bookmarks totally defeats the object, keep them organised and up-to-date, and you'll save on-line time.

#### 6. Get E-mail Notification of Web **Site Updates**



If you are a regular visitor to a particular site to find new, updated information, why not use a personalised URL-minder? NetMind's URL-minder (www.netmind.com/ URL-minder/URL-minder.html)

keeps track of a specified Web site and can determine when the content has changed, e-mailing you when ever it notices an update or new information. Saves you the bother of checking it all the time.



#### 6. Learn how to use your Search **Engine - Properly**



How much time do you waste trawling through the huge numbers of useless responses your search engine spews out? A little time spent making sure you understand the types of searches available is time well spent.

Yahoo, for example, searches by category, so the quickest way to find information with it is to click through the hierarchical categories. Engines like Alta Vista, HotBot and Infoseek use keywords to search every word on a Web page, so be specific about what you enter. The rule is to be intelligent, and learn how to use the engine properly: most have a help page that explains how to minimise the responses, so check them out.

#### 7. Increase your Cache



Increasing your cache could save you a lot of time. Browsers usually have a default of 5Mb but a couple of good browsing sessions and that'll be used up

in no time. Try increasing your cache to 10Mb this way a greater number of Web pages you visit will be pre-loaded, making your return visits quicker.

#### Netscape Navigator 3.0:

1. Options menu, click Network Preferences.

#### Internet Explorer 3.0:

- 1. Select View menu, click Options.
- 2. Click the Advanced tab, and then click Settings.
- 3. To create more space to store pages temporarily, move the slider to the right.

#### 8. Turn off the Graphics



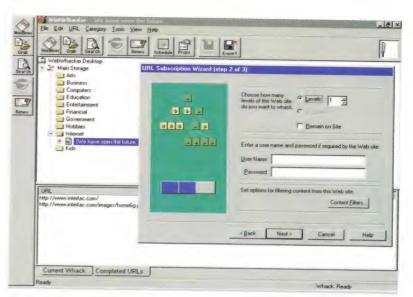
If you are after pure information, turning off the graphics in your browser will save a considerable amount of on-line time. Of course, if you decide you're

on a page where you'd like to see pictures, just click the Images icon and the graphics will appear. A great idea really.

#### 9. Disconnect from your service when you're not using it (obviously)



Nipping off to make that cup of tea or answer a call of nature can be costly. Several utilities are available that automatically terminates a connection if it has been left idle for a specified length of time. Try Di\$connect from Dagar Software (http://www.dagar.com/discon.htm)



Download the useful information at the most suitable times and view at your leisure

#### 10. Use an Offline browser



Offline browsers are increasing popular, and with good reason. They can download the useful content from a site during a time of low traffic and leave you

the information to view offline at your leisure.

Browsers like freeloader (http:// www.freeloader.com), or Web Whacker from Forefront (http://www.forefront. com), offer you some real opportunities to save some moolah. One word of warning though, be careful when you set up how many levels of information you want the Offline browser to return, you could end up with half the Web on your machine.

#### 11. Browse the Web using an Intelligent Agent



Many packages like Autonomy (http://www.agentware.com) allow users to 'train' a personalised Web Researcher by telling it what information you are

after and then setting it free onto the Internet. The Intelligent aspect comes in



Let the agents do the work of finding your information, you can do something more interesting. And less costly

the agent's ability to adapt and improve its browsing with each crawl.

Eventually you should have a sophisticated search engine of your own. Autonomy will even search whilst you are off-line, only when you are back online will it report any findings.

#### 12. Download using FTP



If possible, why not download from an FTP site? Most popular sites have an FTP presence and they are generally a little quicker than using Web pages that are

full of graphics - and other users!

#### 13. Compress files before sending them

If you're planning on sending lots of files, use a compression utility to shrink your file size and thus the amount of time it takes to send the file.

The best package available is WinZip (http://www.winzip.com)

#### 14. Use the Freebies



Take full advantage of the freebies that many of the Commercial on-line services offer. A bit of careful timing, and you could get virtually free

access via the many '50 free hour' trials that are available. Keep a check on this one though, they'll want your credit card details straight away, and unless you cancel it at the end of the period, you could well end up paying.

#### 15. Stop using the Internet!



It's the sure-fire way of saving pounds - and it's the only guaranteed one!

So get down the car boot sale with that modem now!

#### Pass GCSE with LCL Self-tuition

- Full range of GCSE courses. Mostly Windows 95 titles. All run on Windows 3.1 & 95.
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- Genuine British GCSE courses that follow the National Curriculum.

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(11 years - GCSE)



- Now with video, Virtual Teacher & Mock GCSE
- Windows 95 title (runs on 3.1).
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   10,000 questions.



#### CD MICRO FRENCH



- French actors talk to you via video and you reply into a microphone (in French)
- Windows 95 title (runs on 3.1).
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- Really TEACHES not just tests and makes French easy and fun.



#### CD MICRO GERMAN

(Beginners - GCSE & Business)



- German actors talk to you via video and you reply into a microphone (in German)
- Window 95 title (runs on 3.1).So easy to use.Helps with German business letters. • Really TEACHES not just tests and makes German easy and fun.

#### CD MICRO ENGLISH

(8 years - GCSE)



- Improves spelling, punctuation, grammar and comprehension skills
- It takes beginners to GCSE level. The actors and speech used make it also suitable for learning English as a foreign language.

#### CD KIDS MATHS (3-12 years)



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- Graphs and much more

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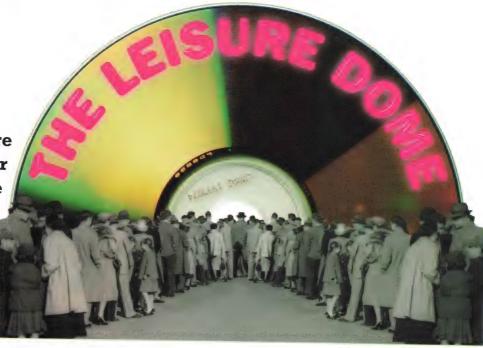
Phone 01491 579345, sent within 24 hours



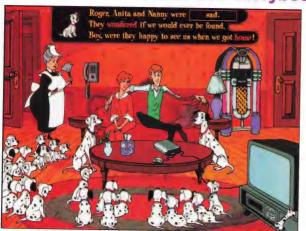


This month's Leisure

Dome has something for
everyone, from home
productivity to route
planners. We even
have something for
you Internet addicts



#### **101 Dalmatians Animated Storybook**



Hooray! The Dalmatians have been safely reunited

IF your kids are lovers of the cute little puppies in Disney's 101 Dalmatians, then here's a chance for them to follow and interact with their exploits over 16 screens in Disney's latest CD-Rom release, 101 Dalmatians Animated Storybook.

You have the choice to either sit back and enjoy the colourful story whilst Pongo, Perdy and the puppies read to you or you can choose to read and play. In the latter you follow the Dalmatians through the screens where you can activate actions, games and sing-alongs by selecting different items. If you find you have a favourite screen there is the option to skip directly to it.

As well as the active screens you can select certain text which provides you with a dictionary, giving a picture and definition of that word, in addition there is a thesaurus which gives the option to change part of the text.

Disney's 101 Dalmatians Animated Storybook is a colourful disc which is easy and fun to use, allowing you to play while you learn. – **LW** 

Supplier	Disney Interactive
Telephone _	_0181 222 1413
Price	_£39.99
Rating	_*****



ScreenPrint Gold allows you to easily capture and review images copied using the print screen key

#### ScreenPrint Gold

SCREENPRINT is a small utility that enhances the print screen function for taking snapshots. Usually, pressing the print screen key (marked as Prt Sc) simply copies the image on screen into the clipboard buffer.

From there, you load your favourite graphics package and paste the image into it – if the graphics package supports clipboard copying that is.

With ScreenPrint Gold running, any images copied using the print screen key are displayed as thumbnails in a window. From there, the package offers you numerous tools such as printing or saving the image, sending the image to a recipient via e-mail or converting it to one of 15 supported graphics formats.

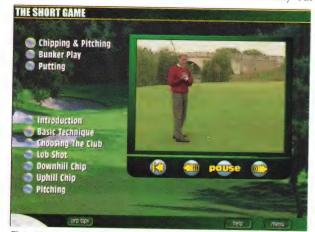
There are also image editing functions such as rotate, flip and mirror as well as numerous special effect filters like emboss and posterise.

ScreenPrint is a neat and useful utility but with most people having a graphics package of some sort and the almost universal ability to paste the clipboard contents to any application, it's not exactly an original or essential tool. – **DE** 

#### **Play Better Golf**

GOLF is without doubt one of the world's must popular sports and there are professionals making a lot of cash from teaching others to play it better.

Personal tuition fees are costly but



Tips galore on all aspects of golfing await you in Play Better Golf from GSP

thanks to good old PC multimedia technology you can now plug in a CD-Rom and get tips from the experts in the comfort of your own home and for a fraction of the price.

Golf Monthly teaching panellists Gary Smith and Keith Wood are your tutors and take you through many aspects of golfing technique through the use of extensive video footage. Some of the sections to explore include Fault Analysis, The Swing, The Short Game and The Long Game. Each of these sections contain step-by-step lessons to help you find your faults and improve your technique.

There's plenty to learn in Play Better Golf so if you're looking to pick up a few good tips, check this out. – **DE** 

Supplier	GSP
Telephone _	_01480 496666
Price	_£19.95
Rating	_****

#### **Home Essentials**

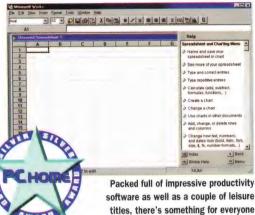
HOME Essentials is Microsoft's latest offering specifically designed with the home user in mind. It's a collection of five programs which includes three Microsoft productivity titles, Word 97, Microsoft Works 4.0 and Money 97, as well as two leisure titles, Encarta 97: World Atlas and Microsoft Football.

The package also includes an MSN CD with one month's free connection to the Internet, Internet Explorer is also in there but this is apparently version 3.01, which suffers from a potential security problem that has been fixed in version 3.02

For £99, Home Essentials does offer pretty darn good value for money. Word 97 needs no introduction as probably the best-selling wordprocessor for the PC and is replete with powerful features. I use it all the time.

Microsoft Money is a money management tool with on-line banking support and again, I use it myself at home to keep my pitiful income in some semblance of order.

Works is itself a collection of applications that include a wordprocessor, spreadsheet, database and communications programs. No



doubt the wordprocessor will be obsolete due to Word 97 but the spreadsheet and database will probably come in useful.

To round off the package and to introduce an element of fun into what is mainly a productivity package, Microsoft Football should provide a little stress relief after a hard day writing to the bank manager with Word or balancing your accounts with Money.

Home Essentials is a great all-round package which should appeal to nearly all home users and at £99, it's good value for money too. - DE

Supplier	Microsoft
Telephone _	_01734 270001
Price	_£99
Rating	_***



Chesterfield plan their route to the hallowed twin towers of Wembley

#### Route 66

This isn't, as the name might suggest, a tourist guide to THE route 66. It's simply a route planner in the mould of Autoroute.

This UK & Ireland version of the route planner is designed for Windows 95, and can calculate the quickest, shortest or least expensive route for whichever journey you care to mention (within UK & Ireland obviously).

The route is displayed in map form, with different colours for different types of road, and in written form with a full breakdown of which route to travel, how long the journey will take and even a cost estimate. I was impressed with the speed at which the program calculates the journey, although it doesn't have as many options as Autoroute for example. But all in all this is a viable, if lightweight, alternative to Microsoft's package. - PN

Supplier	Edge Publishing
Telephone _	_01844 261770
Price	£36
Rating	_*****

#### Formula 1

AND there goes Damon, and there goes Villeneuve vying for the lead in this terrifically exciting race. Well that's what it sounds like

when you watch Formula 1 on the telly courtesy of the ever excitable Murray Walker.

This CD-Rom is billed as the "ultimate multimedia guide to the world's fastest sport". It offers a wealth of information on every race from 1950 to 1996.



And there goes Damon - off to Arrows

It gives you short biographies of the legendary drivers, plus listings of all the tracks, full listing of results, and detailed descriptions of more than 1,000 of the greatest cars.

It's undoubtedly of use as a reference guide if you're a bit of a Statto, but for the passive observer of the occasional grand prix it's all a bit bland. A trainspotter's guide to Formula 1 if you like. - PN

Supplier \_\_\_\_Koch Media Telephone \_\_\_01256 707767 £19.99 Price \*\*\*\*

#### **Internet Utilities**

THIS is the equivalent of the Swiss Army knife every tool you could wish for is here, all packed into one program. When it installs, it imports your Navigator Explorer or bookmarks and places them in a tabbed box with large icons. It supplies some bookmarks itself and more are available for import on the Internet. Clicking on a bookmark starts Explorer or Navigator and goes to the site. However, I found it tedious scrolling through the tabs looking for the site I wanted.

The NetMeter (download this freebie from www.starfishsoftware.com) can float free or clip itself Remember HP onto Explorer or Navigator Dashboard - this to provide feedback on the is even better data transfer rate and time on-line. It also provides a log of when and how long



you were on-line (but what you really want to know is how much it's costing

The name of this package is slightly misleading, because the tools aren't just for the Internet. For instance, there is a virtual screens facility that enables you to create a Windows desktop that is two or more screens wide. You can then open applications on any virtual screen and quickly flick between them. WinTools offers quick access to commonly used Win 95 applications, such as Find, Explorer and Control Panel, and QuickZip offers the industry standard file compression/decompression.

All this functionality is provided in a taskbar that pops up when you move the mouse to the screen edge, and it is similar to a souped up HP Dashboard. If you're a fan of that program, you'll love this one. - RW

Supplier \_\_\_Starfish Software Telephone \_\_\_0181-875-4455 £39.99



VER the years, at various education shows and launches of government initiatives, the importance of Information Technology - and computers in particular - has been stressed. But what is the situation in the average classroom? The National Curriculum states that IT should

be used in all aspects of learning, but is it possible?

Every two years there is a Survey of Information Technology in Schools in the England and Wales, and the latest report was published recently. The situation is getting better, but it still makes depressing reading. The average number of pupils per computer in primary schools was fifteen in 1995-6 for children aged 5 and over, compared to eighteen in 1993-4 and an amazing 107 in 1984-85. Secondary schools do fare better with an average of nine children per computer.

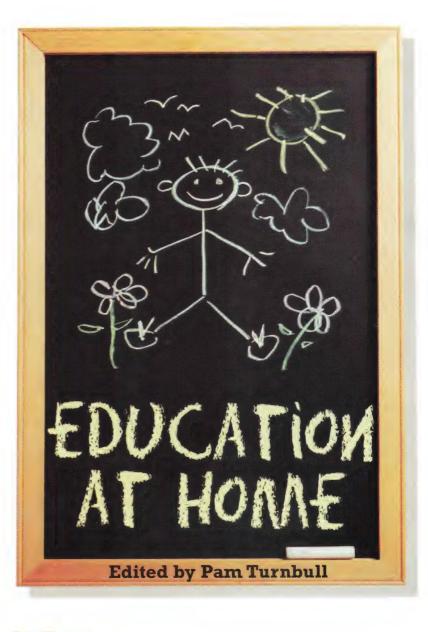
Schools are buying more machines, but the total expenditure in cash terms on hardware and software for classroom use is £23,600 per school at secondary level. Sounds good, until you realise that this works out at an average of £28 per child. Move to the primary sector and this becomes £9.

Yet it is what schools do with their computers that is important, and 74 per cent of teachers feel confident in using computers in the classroom, and there is more training and awareness than ever before. So next time your local PTA ask for help in raising money for computers or software, bear these figures in mind.

#### **QUIVERING QUAVERS**

IT seems that all schools want children to be musical whether with hand-bells, a recorder or an ocarina. Some children never seem to catch on, others are quite happy with a triangle, a few flourish. But not everyone will play beautifully, some of us just want to enjoy sound, others need home help few parents can give. Enter the computer, with a variety of ways to stimulate even the least musical.





#### SimTunes

Maxis (0171-500 1500) Supplied with Harmonica

NOT a music staff in sight. Using the idea that some composers see notes as colours, SimTunes features a variety of bugz walking across a picture on the screen and as they cross a colour, a note is played. Bugz walk in a straight line until they meet a function dot, when they'll change direction to oblige as well as play a sound and produce a light effect if you wish.

Bugz all look different and you can alter their speed, volume and starting points as you get more adventurous and then add them to your picture with a pair of tweezers. Only four bugz can play at once and you must choose one yellow, green, blue and red. Then there are the Loop Bugz, but I'll let you discover these for yourself.

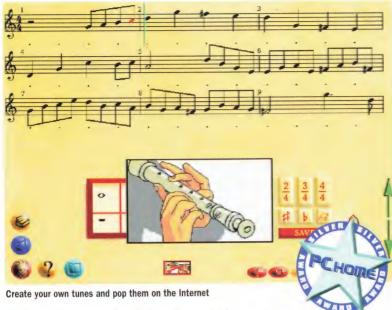
> It's all very straightforward and great fun. A range of pictures - which play different styles of music - are included to

get you going, you can edit these or create your own to fit a particular mood. Creating pictures is quite easy, just remember that each colour corresponds to a different note and the program provides some geometric shapes as stamps to help get you started.

The technique is quite sophisticated, though it looks like pure chaos at times. Experimentation is the best way to find your way around and SimTunes works well with the someone who's never tickled the ivories or with someone who's in the know. There are different levels of play from basic to advanced. At higher levels you can change the scale, with choices such as Major and Minor pentatonic, Blues and Mixolydian and if that's lost you the program will happily explain all. Then there's the Web site ...

Don't think of SimTunes as making musicso much as painting with sound. This is definitely music by the backdoor as children discover the fundamentals of music and composition and never realise it.





#### **Adventures in Music with a Recorde**

£24.99 UbiSoft (0181-944 9000) Supplied with Recorder

ON the serious side this package teaches music theory, fingering and technique, but it's wrapped up in a trip around the world with Rick Order. In countries as diverse as Africa, South America, France and Tibet you meet experts to help

you read music, understand rhythm, harmony and breathing. Plus a range of folk tunes from diverse cultures to listen to or play along with.

In Tibet you learn about

crotchets, minims, semibreves, tempo and bar lines, as well as the names of notes - G A B and C. Moving on to Mexico there are crotchet rests while quavers appear in the Savannah and the more advanced lessons in France. In total there are 16 lessons and you can work through country by country or access particular lessons directly. Songs can be printed, individual notes listened too and the fingering shown while you can play with or without accompaniment.

To see the fingers moving over the recorder holes is a real help for beginners, as is the ability to change the speed via the metronome - you can progress at your own pace. I would have liked the option to turn off the background sounds, which though atmospheric, do become somewhat distracting after a while. But this a huge improvement on



Learn the basics on a roofton in Tibet ... ... or about beats and rests in Mexico

the books which usually come with a recorder.

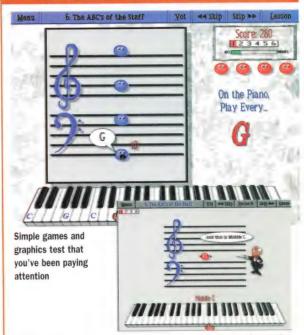
All the packages here encourage you to make your own tunes. With this

offering, if you have Internet access, you can pop these onto the World Wide Web and grab other tunes from people all around the world. Excellent.

> Adventures in Music with a Recorder



There are traditional songs from around the world to listen to and learn



**Music Ace** £29.95

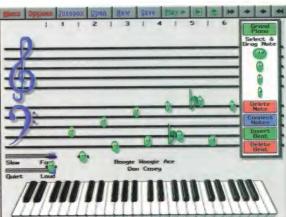
**Explanation and interaction** work well for initial learning and revision

Guildsoft (01752 895100) HERE emphasis is placed on listening with lessons on pitch recognition and discrimination, the relationship between written pitch and the piano keyboard, the treble bass, octaves, half steps/whole steps, sharps, flats, key signatures and so on. At the end of each of the 24 lessons there is a game to test what you've just learnt and this manages to be both a good revision tool and fun.

Little and often is the key, and as this is aimed at children who are interested in the subject in the first place, it would probably work best as a complement to more formal piano lessons. But the look and feel is friendly and as music theory is never usually popular this will help even the self-taught.

Children are also encouraged to try their hands at composing with the Music Doodle Pad. Or how about editing a range of well-known pieces by adding notes, change the instruments and so on? You can then listen to the new arrangements on the Jukebox. A good balanced approach with a friendly and talkative teacher.





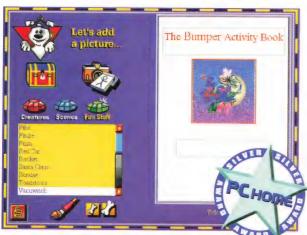
The Doodle Pad is a brilliant way to both edit classic pieces and create your own

#### **DTP FOR BEGINNERS**

HOW do you encourage your child to write a story? This is an important skill and one which most children under 11 will accomplish by writing as little as possible. The computer is a tool which can make the process more interesting.

There are packages which help teach the basics of design, wordprocessing, writing and storytelling, where the software doesn't get in the way by demanding an understanding of cut and paste or printer technology, rather they let children use their imagination and get on with the story writing.

The fact that they are learning the basics of how all DTP packages work is incidental. And when your offspring move to a desire for letterheads, invitations, posters and the like, look out for the Disney Print Studios (Disney Interactive 0181-222 1571 costing £34.99). These come in all flavours from Winnie the Pooh to 101 Dalmatians, and neatly fill the gap between total hand-holding to individualised projects.



The title screen graphic can be an illustration from the Treasure Chest, a photo or your own creation

#### Create-a-Book

£24.99 (refills £9.99) PrintPaks (0181-876 0880) Requirements: colour printer

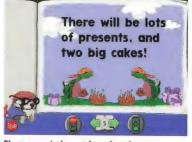
THIS series - look out for Window Art, Magnets, Pop-Up Greetings and Awesome Iron-Ons Kits - is superb, and this addition is the one with the widest scope allowing for stories or project presentation. But what makes it so special is that everything to create and design three 12-page books is included in the box: pre-scored and punched paper, card (with window for a graphic), binding and plastic cord and fun buttons to keep it all together.

There's no manual, as Max the dog is your guide in a very cleverly put together

program. This is for the child or family who are new to DTP and need considerable hand-holding and wouldn't appreciate



Max is on hand to help, and here you can refine the structure of your book



Show your stories again and again

words such as font or leading. Therefore, options are limited and size of text (sentences or individual words and letters) and graphics are decided by eye as you click on the big or small dog bone. But these limitations do mean that the printed books will work

You can actually choose between three different books: Storybook, activity book or scrapbook. Or opt for a mix. As you set the page there are both text and graphics boxes. The latter you can fill with a choice of 300 drawn or photographed images - you can add your own too as there is a simple painting package which you can use from scratch or to enhance the graphics provided with special effects, stamps or a few well-chosen squiggles. You can change pages around at will and I liked the wide variety of templates provided from dot-todots, to a finger-print collection. A good starting point and a good way to build confidence with this type of product.



#### Stanley's Sticker **Stories**



£19.95 Iona Software (0181-296 9454)

IF you want something for the very young, then this package takes the idea of the very popular sticker books and lets children create their own story well before they have the computer

or literary skills to do so on their own. This comes from the same stable as Sammy's Science House and Bailey's Book House and the quality and instant accessibility for even the youngest child is there again. As well as great fun it practices story-building, vocabulary and spelling.

Stanley is an otter with a definite north of Watford Gap accent and not only does he give you information on how the program works, he is also a source of story ideas. No reading skill is needed as information is graphical and spoken. You can choose from 30 backgrounds which become the basis for your pages. Add to these any of 325 stickers from friends to food.

Mood music and sound effects are there too or you can add your own if your PC has a microphone. You don't have to have text, but if you opt for it there is a choice of colours, fonts, sizes and centred or justified text. Pages can be added, deleted or their order changed at any time and can be as long or as short as you like. When you've finished, creations can be viewed on screen or printed out.

More than just a sticker book, this teaches the fundamentals of story writing, DTP and wordprocessing without losing sight of what a child is trying to do - tell a tale.

> Stanley's Sticker **Stories**





Choose your background, click the arrow to go inside a location

#### A POINT OF REFERENCE

THERE is an increasing number of edutaining science on TVs, bookshelves and computer screens these days. But remember that quantity is not synonymous with quality so watch out for content if you're buying with children in mind - the National Curriculum specifies certain topics and US schools others.

Also science will usually cross-over with other curriculum areas so try to keep the balance. Last, but not least, don't just concentrate on computer-based information and reference; there are a huge number of interactive museums around the country catering for all ages, from Eureka in Halifax to the Science Museum in London.



#### **Earth Quest**

£39.99

Dorling Kindersley (0171-753 3488)

Plus; Pocket book on Rocks and Minerals, trial subscription to Science Online

A FASCINATING subject which is also relevant to the National Curriculum for science and geography as well as allowing you to find out what that strange outcrop was you saw on holiday, and explaining the reality behind such films as Dante's Inferno.

A highly graphical virtual reality interface and approach is the trademark of the Eyewitness encyclopaedias providing a less-overwhelming access route to the quantity of information. In this underground gallery you can find out about gems such as the Hope Diamond and rocks galore from metamorphic to extra-terrestrial.

From a group, choose one in particular and you'll find an explanation with unusual words highlighted in red and explained by a click of the mouse. You can also see the profile, origin and key facts, as well as compare it with any

other rock or group in the database.

As well as presenting information in easily digested chunks, you can collect information and specimens for the Earth Builder; an excellent quest challenge which will take you through all as-



pects of the Earth. Information is provided in easily digestible chunks

# Be an amazing animal expert



Includes CD-ROM, books, stickers and a bird mobile

LINK

Amazing Animals web site

Free trial subscription to DK's exclusive











9 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8PS • http://www.dk.com



Navigator, index and timeline are constantly available

Chambers off the main gallery give you access to mining, how our planet was shaped and the violent side. Via these chambers you'll come across structures such as sulphur or topaz, click and you can see how they have developed and formed. Every now and again the program will tell you to visit a particular part of the gallery as the timeline has developed another mineral for our investigation.

If volcanoes fascinate you, you can create six different types and watch them erupt. The same goes for earthquakes and both give you information and video

clips on the knock-on effects. Find out where in the world drift mining takes place or more about the Icelandic volcanoes. I'd have liked the Mauritius volcano to get a mention (it being the only one on British soil) but you can't have everything. This package comes very close indeed however, with a relevant selection of video clips, a good index and the ability to keep you coming back for





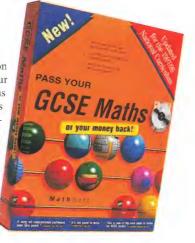
#### Win a chance to **Pass your GCSE** Maths

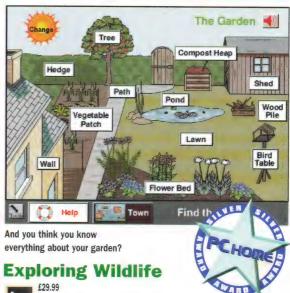
MATHSOFT has released a new version of its Maths revision aid - Pass your GCSE Maths. Written by three maths teachers, the updated program allows students to pick the topics they are interested in - algebra, shape and space, number, etc. - and skip those they have already mastered.

The program boasts hundreds of past exam questions and model answers all which have been supplied by examining boards. The package also features ten levels of attainment in accordance with the GCSE syllabus,

concentrating on levels 5-8. If your child is need of a boost with their Maths then this could be the program they have been looking for.

Pass your GCSE Maths, which has been revised to cover the 1997/98 National Curriculum is priced at £24.95 but we've 16 copies to give away absolutely free. All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning one is tell us how many levels of attainment the package features and send your answers to PC Home, GCSE Maths Competition, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4NP. Entries no later than 12 July please.





Anglia Multimedia (01603 615151)

ANGLIA is re-packaging a number of its products for the home market. Designed for UK schools and tied closely to the National Curriculum, these come with activity sheets and if you access the Anglia Web site (http://www.anglia.co.uk) or pages on AOL, you'll find extension ideas and information to many of its programs.

Wildlife gives you three programs: Seashore Life, Survival Mysteries of Nature and Garden Wildlife. Anglia has access to the Survival documentaries and so all its programs are brimming with photos, video and sound clips.

Garden Wildlife is a simple package which takes you around a typical British town and provides a database of over 135 creatures from ants to zebra spiders. Using the garden as your menu you can alter night to day and see just what inhabits the wood pile, lawn or compost heap. A friend is on hand to help you identify what you've found and when you're satisfied with the garden, there's the park to explore and information to find in the cinema or library. Not as pretty as some packages, but the information is faultless.

For more marine discoveries, Seashore Life follows a similar but more graphical and atmospheric approach using a lighthouse as your base. Information on animal classification is in the filing cabinet, while the TV gives you videos and animation. As with Garden Wildlife, there is a quiz to make sure you've been paying attention!

The bookshelf gives you access to plants, animals and birds with information on eating habits, lifestyle and where they live. Alternatively, you can just explore the island from shingle and sandy beaches to estuaries. Beautifully clean photos and sound clips help as you read about such fascinating creatures as puffins or put on your wellies and use the identifier to see just what it is that's living under that rock you found on the school field-trip.

Finally there is Survival Mysteries of Nature, which expands the aspects of nature in time and locale and provides some really stunning images and useful narration from Ian Holm. Three documentaries come on the CD-Rom: Hunter and Hunted, Senses, and Flight. A nice point is that you can stop these at any time to find out more through animation, drawings, photos or text. No activity sheets here, but the video sequences are brilliant.

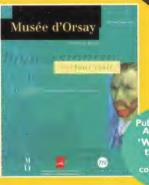


#### An Interactive visit to the world's greatest art masterpieces

CD-ROM MAC MPC

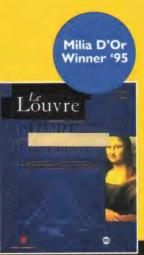
## The Grand Tour





Public Choice Award '96 'Win a Trip to Paris' in-box competition





Build your own private collection with 3 award-winning interactive art titles from Montparnasse Multimedia.

From the Renaissance world of *Michelangelo* to the palace and its paintings of *Le Louvre* through to the amazing collection of 19th/20th century art including the stunning Impressionists paintings of the *Musee D'Orsay*.

The world of art comes to life for you to discover and explore.

It's just like being there!





He's more of a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle than a master painter, nevertheless our own Michelangelo Paul Noel has been "arting about" on some Graphics packages available to try before you buy





Grabbing screens is a doddle with Paint Shop Pro

#### **Paint Shop Pro**

ANYONE who has ever tried to grab an onscreen image such as those found throughout this mag will be aware of just how tricky it can sometimes be. It is essential therefore to have a package that allows you to grab screens and view them quickly, efficiently and with the minimum of fuss.

Paint Shop Pro is one of the best examples of a package that does just that. This complete graphics program for image creation, viewing and manipulation also has an excellent capture feature. Its "bitmap editor" (or raster format image editor if you want to get all technical) allows you to firstly capture an image and then view and edit it in various raster formats such as BMP and GIF formats.

Other handy features include the PSP browser, a visual file system that allows you to easily access, sort, select and manipulate the images via a thumbnail (reduced image) system. This latest version of Paint Shop Pro for Windows 95 comes highly recommended as a package that is multifunctional, easy to use and extremely versatile.

Price \$69.00 Format Floppy Requirements 486, 4Mb Rating \*\*\*\*

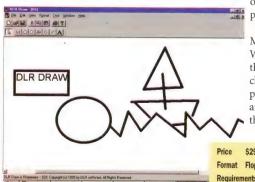
#### Let's Draw

LET'S Draw is a package with the emphasis purely on fun and claims to allow both beginners and professionals alike to draw caricatures.

The full program features over 100 professionally designed caricatures of famous people and its uses are, for example, designing greetings cards, calendar, wrapping paper, posters and the like.

The program is so simple to use that even I was able to pro-Harpo Marx is just one of the caricatures duce professional looking (well you can create with Let's Draw reasonably professional looking) caricatures in a flash, and the drawing tools included are simple to use if basic. All in all a useful novelty rather than an essential tool.





A basic drawing package at a basic price



#### **DLR Draw**

DLR is a basic drawing package, no more no less. It does have the advantage of being a cross-platform tool and thus suitable for Windows 95, NT, Win32s and Macintosh users. However its functions are limited in comparison to some

of the other fully featured art packages.

It has a standard tool set and Mac-like fill patterns for saving Windows metafiles. However the bottom line is that this is a cheap and affordable if limited package. Look elsewhere if your art needs are anything other than the most basic.

\$29.00 Format Floppy Requirements \_\_\_386 DX Rating \*\*\*



Just some of the effects possible with ASL Painter

#### **ASL Painter**

THIS is a full 256 colour paint program that comes complete with features and tools over and above those found in the Paintbrush Applet in Windows.

It has the full range of Geometric tools that you would expect such as circles, ellipses, triangles etc. There are also the Standard Drawing Tools, such as Freehand Pencils and Sprays as well as speciality drawing tools such as Charcoal Pencil, Quill Pen, Calligraphy Pen, Airbrush and so on.

Other Smear and Smudge tools are also featured as are a number of special effects and filtering techniques which it is claimed "you would only expect to find in packages costing considerably more". These effects include Noise (grainy white noise effect), Pointillization (pictures made up of tiny dots) and Posterizing (reduced contrast between shades) as well as others I didn't understand.

It does have a less polished, slightly rougher looking, main screen and toolbar than, say, StreetPainter and far fewer features but it's also a fraction of the cost. A very reasonable package for the price.

\$29.95 Price Format Floppy Requirements 486, 4Mb Rating ★★★★

#### **Street Graphics**

DISIB | 10 6 8 18

1

WITH a title like StreetGraphics I was expecting some kind of cool, radical, Graffiti Spray painting package. What I actually got was an art program that attempts to close the gap between drawing packages and art packages.

It has its own rendering system thus allowing for the creation of rich images,

transparencies, bitmaps, soft-edged shadows and so on. Yet it also retains all the flexibility of a drawing program allowing for modification of images onscreen at any time during the creation process.

I spent the most time experimenting with this particular package simply be-

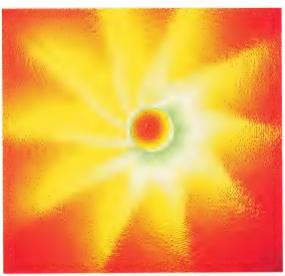
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15 K

cause it puts the most easy to use effects and options at your disposal. From layering to filtering and colour blending, manner of impressive effects can be easily created, even if it does take more

It's a me Mario. No honestly it is. I'm just not feeling well



Just one of the bizarre and trippy images in **Zone Rings from Outer Space** 

#### **Zone Rings from Outer Space**

BILLED as "Spirograph on Steroids", this is less a conventional art package than a program which draws and animates spirograph-like patterns on screen.

Written in Delphi 2 this 32-bit program allows you to edit, colour and animate your own Zone Rings. Choose from 90 preset scenes or alter all the variables and coordinates yourself via over 50 controls and then save the settings.

The result is that you are able to produce all manner of trippy shapes and patterns, which twist, swirl and cavort around the screen in the most wonderfully bizarre manner. It's all very impressive, very weird and extremely hypnotic and will probably make you go bog-eyed, not to mention loopy after a while. Best of all, Zone Rings is freeware so you can't go wrong.

Beware though, prolonged use of Zone Rings is likely to make you want to start popping pills and listening to loud trance/techno music.

Price Freeware Format Floppy Requirements Windows 95 Rating \*\*\*

skilled hands than my own to fully utilise all the features present in an artistic

It is nicely presented and has an attractive if slightly cluttered toolbar and menu. Although given the amount of options present it is particularly impressive that most of its features are so easily accessible. You get what you pay for though and StreetGraphics weighs in at a rather hefty \$95.00.

\$95.00 Price Format Floppy Requirements \_\_\_486 DX33, 8Mb ram, 3Mb HD Rating \*\*\*\*

ELLO everybody, and welcome to another look at the wonders to be found on the World Wide Web. This month, I've been taking a look at Virtual Reality on the Internet - the exciting convergence of two strands of computer technology.

While surfing the Web, I often find myself wanting to dive into the screen and start to swim around all this information rather than look at it as simply words on a page. "I want to be immersed in information," I told Mrs. Webster. "You want to be immersed in soapy water," retorted Eleanor, "you haven't had a bath for a week." It's true readers - in my enthusiasm for 3-D data navigation, I had neglected my personal hygiene. So, here's my warning - while your mind may be in Virtual Reality, your body could do with a bath. But onwards with the show.

This month, Webster finds himself in Virtual Reality, and discovers it's full of mad Californians

http://www.idg.co.uk/pchome/



The VRML Forum is run by one of the instigators of VRML. Mark Pesce (Needless to say, a crazy Californian)

#### VRML

IT was a few years ago now that people began to discuss the possibilities of merging the technologies of Virtual Reality and the Internet. A fundamental step in this direction was the development of VRML - the Virtual Reality Modelling Language.

This established a common language for describing Virtual worlds on the Web, allowing them to be viewed on a browser with a plug-in that supports VRML. There are now a number of plug-ins, and with the recent development of the VRML 2.0 standard, several of these also support the richer environments that VRML 2.0 offers.

For information on the VRML and VRML 2.0 standards, see the pages at the VRML Forum

(http://vag.vrml.org/www-vrml), or for real gearheads, The VRML Repository (http://sdsc.edu/vrml). But for VRML plug-ins, Webster's recommendations are either Netscape's Live 3D plug-in, from http://www.netscape.com or the Silicon Graphics Cosmo player (see right). There's a full list, including ones available for Windows 3.x, at

http://sdsd.edu/vrml/browsers.html

#### Silicon Graphics

http://www.sgi.com

IF you want to get an idea of where Virtual Reality on the Web, or computer graphics in general might be headed, it's always a good idea to visit the Silicon Graphics site.

Recently, SGI has been pushing forth its latest VRML 2.0 plug-in, the Cosmo Player. It's a large download, and could take some time to retrieve, even

like myself. But the Cosmo player is one of the most fully featured VRML 2.0 viewers available, allowing you to navigate worlds and get sound and animation.

In order to promote the Cosmo player and VR in general, SGI has devoted a



Check out Floops twice a week. Imagine - there's someone in an office in Silicon Valley somewhere who spends his whole time working on Floops

whole section of its site to VRML (http://vrml.sgi.com) and also the world's first VR cartoon, depicting the adventures of a cute critter called Floops, available twice a week.

The strength of the Cosmo player is that it supports audio and animation, as well as the Virtual Reality aspects of it. It also enables progressive downloads, in that it can display part of an environment, and then carrying on retrieving additional elements, or external media such as sound. Performance is not good though, which makes navigation difficult. But I'm sure that everything runs fine on the \$30,000 workstations at Silicon Graphics' California offices, so that's all right then.



http://www.superscape.com ONE of the best known Virtual Reality companies, Superscape, is very active in bringing VR to the Web with the develop-

ment of its Viscape plug- Simply Spiffing

in, rather than using the rather loose standard of VRML. However, this means that Viscape worlds can only be created using Superscape's VR modelling package, the expensive but powerful VRT 5.0. This has limited the number of worlds created with Viscape, but the quality of the worlds that can be created is high.

Download the Viscape plug-in from the Superscape site, and then head to Supercity http://www.com for a taster of what Viscape is capable of. Navigating Superscape worlds is easy once you have familiarised yourself with the controls, and because it is a custom language, fancy things such as programming hotlinks into the worlds is simple.



One of the newest VRMI modellers on the market, and very highly regarded

#### **V-Realm**

http://www.ids-nt.com

V-REALM is another VR software company which produces a VR development tool called the V-Realm builder. You can download a demo version of it here for Windows 95, though at 5Mb it is not for the fainthearted or badly connected. V-Realm allows you to output your work as VRML, offering a wider audience for the worlds at the expense of sophistication and functionality of the worlds themselves. Still, you cannot have everything, as I sometimes say.

#### **Virtus**

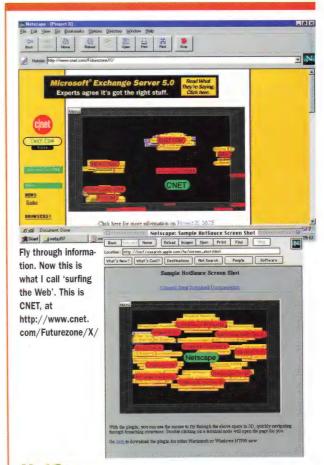
http://www.virtus.com

VIRTUS is one of the longest established companies producing VR solutions for desktop computers, i.e. PCs and Macs. It has a number of affordable VR products, including Walkthrough Pro and 3D Website Builder.

You can also download save disabled versions of the products from here. In fact, with the 3D Website Builder demo, you can still export it as a VRML file, so as long as you produce your VR model in one go, you can still use it. The alternative, and the one I use, is to keep my



Newton's Cradle, on Cool Street on the Supercity site, is fully interactive and shows the power of the Viscape programming language



#### **HotSauce**

http://hotsauce.apple.com

POOR old Apple. So often leading with intriguing new technologies, but when it comes to creating a demand for these technologies, or marketing its products, it doesn't seem to 'have a clue what to do', as '70s glamsters Sweet used to sing on their smash hit 'Blockbuster'.

Here's a perfect example - HotSauce. Formerly known as ProjectX, it introduces a whole new description language, the Meta Content Format (MCF), as a means of representing information about content.

HotSauce is a program that enables you to create three dimensional 'maps' of information using MCF, and then fly through them. Well fetch-me-a-bucket if this isn't just the most fantastic thing ever! I can spend hours zooming in and out of fields of data, sweeping, diving, twisting and turning. The future is turning out just like William Gibson said it would!

HotSauce comes as either a standalone application or a plug-in for Netscape or Internet Explorer, and one of the most common applications for it is to create a virtual map of a Web site or index. One of the biggest MCF's is Yahoo! and there's also one of USENET. It generally works best where the index contains many levels of nested information. It's a great way to find new sites and categories on Yahoo! And of course, you just click on the link to go to the site.

You can easily create your own MCF files with no fancy software (see http://mcf.research.apple.com/hs/tools.html for some programs to help you), in fact you could even index your hard drive as a ProjectX file. This technology is so cool everybody should be using it. But here's the rub - is it actually very useful? The answer, I suspect for most people, is no.

And so here we have another case of great technology, zero application, from those bizarre folks at Apple. Another bunch of crazy Californians.



Cheap, effective VR development software, and there's a Quake angle in there as well - good work Virtus!

machine on all the time and the program always loaded, ha ha!

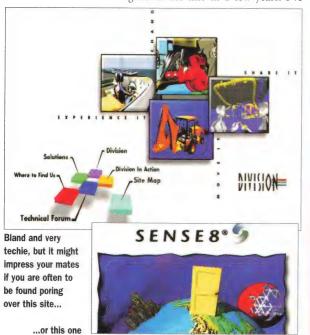
Virtus is also about to release Deathmatchmaker, a tool for creating levels for Quake by dragging and dropping predefined elements for walls, doors, monsters and such like. This might kind of put all the hard work to waste that young Jason Holborn has been putting in for his Quake level editing tutorials, in the pages of this journal. But head on over to http://www.deathmatchmaker.com and see for yourself - there's even a demo available now.

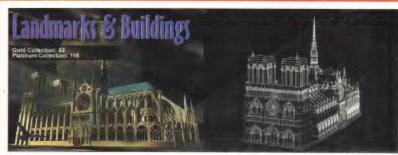
#### Division

http://www.division.com

DIVISION is one of the heavyweights of the VR world, with a range of products and services to deliver Virtual Reality solutions for specialised business and engineering applications. The Web site explains the concept of Division's 'Universal Virtual Product' software, designed to be able to simulate and model any system or machine - essentially a type of virtual prototyping. In fact, it's so complete that you almost wonder whether it's worth building the real thing.

Obviously, Division products is way beyond the realm of the home user, but it is interesting to see what may be coming down the line in a few years. I've





This sumptuous model of Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral will set you back \$700 dollars. In that case I'll get one for me mum, too!

#### **Viewpoint Datalabs**

http://www.viewpoint.com

FOR better quality models, try the superb Viewpoint Datalabs Web site. This company is building up a repository of 3-D models for use with professional modelling programs such as 3D Studio MAX, including things such as animals, vehicles, humans, and buildings.

As they cost several hundred dollars each, they are beyond the pockets of home users, but the Web site offers great preview images to feast your eyes upon.

There is also a collection of VRML objects, though likewise you need to pay a licence fee to use these as well. I'd like to see more 3-D models placed in the public domain for everyone to use, but for now, if you need a 3-D model of a dinosaur or a hot-dog stand in a hurry, this is the place to go. The site is also very well set up to handle Internet orders - a great example of how to run a business on the Web. I'm going to start work tonight on my very own model of Virtual Surbiton, and see if I can flog it to Viewpoint for a few grand.

started drawing up plans for my own Virtually Perfect Pub, though this one won't have any Carling Black Label, or screens showing football. Instead, they'll be rows of cribbage boards, a Scrabble tourney and a range of draught (virtual) real ales, including my particular favourite, Old Throatbender.

Another heavyweight Virtual Reality

company is the Sense8 Corporation, and you can see its plans for virtual domination with the Virtual World Toolkit at http://www.sense8.com. Or Autodesk, and its Cyberspace Development Kit at http://www.autodesk.com. Again, well beyond the reach of most home users, but we can all dream, can't we? Pip pip!

Simply Spiffing!

#### Planet 9

http://www.planet9.com

PLANET 9 is one of those ker-razee Californian companies which specialises in creating Virtual renditions of cities - mainly for trade shows and the like.

At the site, you can visit Virtual New York, Virtual Chicago, Virtual Los Angeles and a number of other cities in the US, displayed as VRML. Don't be fooled by the fancy 'screenshot' graphics though - once you actually download the worlds they are pretty much unrecognisable as the city they are supposed to be representing.

I just about made out the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, and the Golden Mile in

Las Vegas just looked like a bunch of rectangles. Where are the neon signs, the dancing girls, the casino, the razzmatazz? It looks more like Surbiton than Las Vegas.

This looks great doesn't it? Believe me, I've been there - and it isn't



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http://www.dircon.net



#### Comanche 3

Well, we gave the matter some thought, then some more thought, and then even some more thought but we still couldn't come up with a decent chopper gag to introduce the latest instalment in NovaLogic's Comanche series. Just as well really.

Our man Evans is a copter expert and all round flight cockpit in his bedroom, though he strenuously denies this rumour (and many others).

Suffice to say that he was wowed by Comanche 3's amazing visuals, thrilling realism and extensive options, in terms of both the single player and multi-player games. He even managed to annoy the rest of the team by playing the main tune quite loudly, which reminded us all of some long forgotten '80s series theme piece.

It's a sterling game, and well worthy of the accolade VoxelSpace 2 graphics on page 80 now!



#### **FEATURES**

#### UNDER DEVELOPMENT .....



Darren Allan thinks he should be on that quiz program, "They Think it's All Over", not because he is the font of all sporting knowledge - but rather in case the Ladies Volleyball team are on the "Feel the sports person" bit. Despite his depraved fantasies he previewed these sports games

# lames

#### **REVIEWS**

#### Outlaws .....

Yeeeeharrrr! Go fer' yer' guns, ya' varmint! Daz Evans is the gunslinger in this LucasArts shooter, remaking A Fist-full of Dollars (new title, a handful of threepenny bits)

Speedster .....

Speed freak Noely reckons he's something else behind the wheel. Unfortunately, he spent most of his time through the windscreen and in

front of the wheel





#### HOME AND DRY ......98





This month sees the second and final instalment of our solution to Discworld II, along with hints to that Duke style game Blood, and tips for Doctors who are bemused by Theme Hospital



To Die hard is Wayne Williams'

so he leapt on the chance to yell

slaughtering masses of innocent

people

ambition, or so he once told us, and

"Yippie-Ki-Yay!", waving an uzi around

#### Carmageddon ......



Carnage on the roads! Yes, it's Darren Allan behind the wheel and he's not just insane, he's totally barking! Woof! Woof! Beep! Aaarrrgghhhh! Squelch, slurp, wheelspin.....





Daz Allan considers himself to be well practised in the art of management. "You just put on a long brown coat, and pace about the touchline puffing on a Havana", he informed us



"It's a bit like QED, like repeats of a previous version, or something?" Nope, we informed Mr. Noel, it's a blaster from Cranberry Source

#### Redneck Rampage .....



"Uh huh, huh huh guffaw, chortle. Ur, In an ironic stroke that would make Paaawww, look what I done, huh huh good old Miss Morrisette proud, Daz huhuh." That's the most intelligent Evans got to review a game called Sentient. It's all adventurey stuff, thing rednecked Paul Noel's ever said, apparently

#### Need for Speed 2 .....

and it was about this game



You just can't keep that man Paul Noel out of cars, he's worse than that Jeremy Clarkson. Next thing we know he'll be road-testing Porsches (radio controlled ones, naturally)

He's football crazy, football mad! His name's Paul Noel, someone kick him in the... er, someone kick the ball into the net? Erm, no, hang on, give us a minute here...



#### Magic: The Gathering ....



"Are you gathering? Ping! Ping! Ow! Ow!", a phrase often uttered by idiot Marathon players round here. Nothing to do with Microprose's Magic, mind you, which Daz Evans perused

#### Puzzle Bobble ...



What? A mystic bobble hat, with a magical puzzle on the bobble which when solved opens a gateway to Hell itself? Nope, it's a game from GT Interactive, which Paul Noel reviewed



#### axelerator .....



Daz Evans took a turn at the wheel, singing something about it only being 24 hours from Tulsa. We promptly slapped him about and told him to get on with the review

#### SHORTS

#### Yoda Stories .....



Wayne Williams decided he would this new desktop adventure from LucasArts, review

#### Lomax .....

Platform game action ahoy, with our mad leaping man Paul Noel. Ooh, look he can fly!

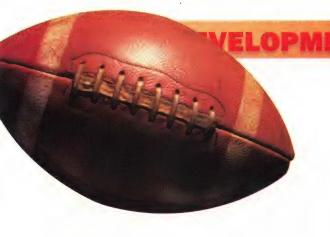
#### actua Soccer (Club Edition)

More footy action for "Noel of the Rovers", as he tries his golden boots out with Actua

#### Pinball Power Pack .....



Flipping Heck! It's a bumper-packed pingtastic plethora of pinball from 21st Century! (surprised gasps)



# a Question of Sport

Darren Allan takes a look at the up and coming sporty games you armchair fanatics will be interested in, some American (as a lot of them are), some "traditional"



Design your own course, right down to details such as which bush you want next to the tee

#### Jack Nicklaus 4

MANY of you golfing fanatics will already have experienced the Jack Nicklaus series of games and are no doubt looking forward to the next one. This fourth incarnation promises to be the best by miles, with

rather impressive looking visuals and a game engine that reputedly matches its high standards.

As you can see from the piccies, it really does look the proverbial business - with atmospheric touches such as the early morning mist rolling across the fairway adding to that golfing ambience.

But it's not set merely to look good, Accolade is claiming that it will be the

"most accurate golf simulation in existence", a fairly lofty ambition that it will hopefully realise.

The hallmark of the Jack Nicklaus series of golf games has always been the course designing element - there are quite a few Web sites which feature various efforts at courses, some based on real ones and others completely fictional. JN 4 retains this facet, with an improved course designer.

There are set courses with the game as well, obviously, and you can take on the man himself, as before. Multiplayer options have also been implemented, including play over the Internet, which should be awesome think huge virtual tournaments...

Jack Nicklaus 4 should be reviewed in these hallowed pages next issue. In the meantime, if you want to know more then hassle Accolade on 0181 788 0200.

#### **Triple Play 97**

IT'S in the game, man, as EA Sports is always fond of telling us, and indeed it may be right. So what's in

All 28 Major League stadiums have been painstakingly recreated

Triple Play 97, its up and coming

For starters, it has the official Major League Baseball license, incorporating

over 700 players and their stats from

the 96 season. Realism freaks will also no doubt be pleased to hear that all 28 major league stadiums will be

fully realised too, using EA's "Virtual

The game promises stacks of

options and gameplay backed up with

quality visuals. In game, the players

will be fully animated with motion

capture technology, and the engine

features proper physics for wind, ball

A full suite of management options

will be included, such as creating your

own teams, player drafts and trades

Rounding off the package will be

the multiplayer mode, which will allow

six mates to crack each others balls

about the park, so to speak. Further

details from EA on 01753 549442.

and all the essential malarkey that

baseball game?

Stadium" technology.

spin and the like.

makes up a US sport.

Blam! He cracks it! A homer? Looks a bit more like a flyball to me



Check out the smart visuals - notice the reflections on the water's surface

An underwater hole... you get them at Scarborough's Mini Golf greens too

Lush detail is the order of

**3D Ultra Mini Golf** 

game, but there aren't any (to my

knowledge anyway) out there which

simulate that fine summer seaside

Now you can happily knock your

weird, wonderful and kerr-azy locales

such as windmills, see-saws, gnomes,

including "Neptune's Kingdom", which

is completely submerged underwater, a Fairlyland castle hole, a futuristic

affair involving laser beams and so on.

Both novice and more skilled gamers will be catered for with two

methods of putting, EasyPutt and TruePutt. The former just requires a simple mouse click to take a shot, though the latter needs both angle and

shot strength to be judged to

perfection (or not, as the case may

Up to four players will be able to play on the same machine, so those

dimpled balls through a variety of

There are 18 holes planned,

OK, so I've already looked at one golf

the day, as you can see

past-time, Mini Golf.

dinosaurs and the like.





impressive - the guys on our sister PlayStation mag. PlayStation Pro, have been playing the console version solidly, and reckon it really is the business, so as long as the PC version is similar rugby fans should be in for

a treat.

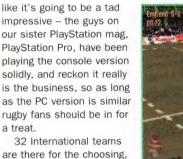
32 International teams are there for the choosing, including all the biggies, the Five Nations. Once out

on the pitch, the graphics - as you can see from the shots - look rather smart and the sound should really add to the atmosphere, with authentic crowd noise samples and commentary from Bill McLaren and Bill Beaumont.

One of the most novel facets of Jonah Lomu Rugby is the camera

angles used to view the game, which are intelligent and pan in and out as the action dictates. This allows you to see what's going on more clearly - very handy in those cluttered mauls.

Jonah ought to be on your PC later this year - for more info, contact Codemasters on 01926 814132. ◆



and all the tournaments are there from the World Cup to



The two teams prepare for the usual farce that is a lineout

#### NCAA Final Four

FANCY shooting some serious hoop, yet game? Well Mindscape has got something in the pipeline that may just interest you, based on the game of College basketball rather than

visually the game looks pretty hot – all the players are motion captured and the animation is detailed, so those mighty dunks

angles. A full coaching mode provides strategic depth, with everything from play design to subs and even

The multiplayer aspect has also been considered, with the facility to play up to four players at a time, either against each other or teamed another one on the near horizon, so look out for a review very soon. Mindscape is on 01444 246333.





And who said white men couldn't jump, eh?

Going for the power dunk. the backboard breaking exploding driv

#### wet Sunday afternoons will never be the same again. Get the full low-down from those crazy chaps at Sierra on 01734 303322.

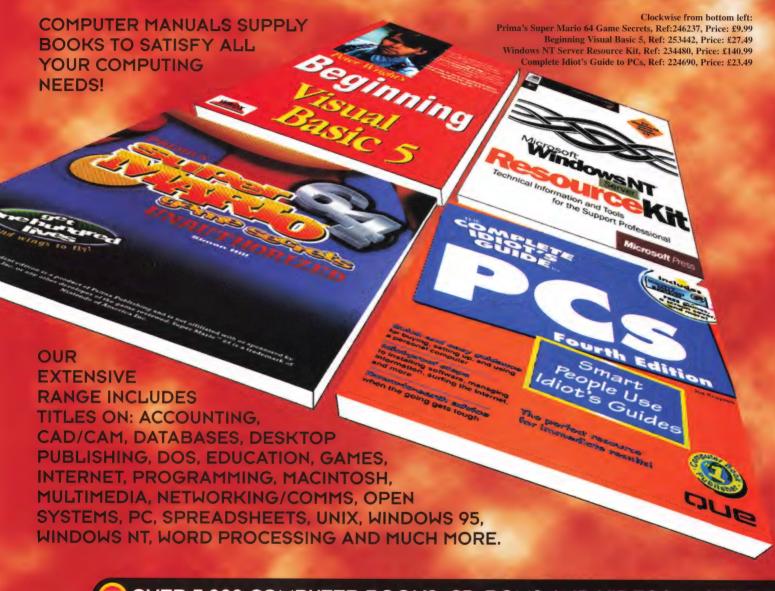
Jonah Lomu Rugby WELL, I guess it had to happen - after the mockery he made out of, well, everyone last year the lumbering 19 stone hulk Mr. Lomu has put his name to a rugby sim. And who's going to tell him that his game isn't any good? Certainly not us...

But that's OK, because it does look



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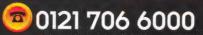
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## Esoteria 3

OBEUS - probably not a name you've heard of before. Well, get ready to hear about it, because Mobeus has got a rather smart looking 3-D action game in the pipeline by the name of Esoteria 3.

Imagine a different reality, a solar system called Azeria which is dving... so they create Esoteria, a new home five light years away. Seven planets are terraformed, and the Capitol Esoteria 3 sees a madman come to power. He creates these cybernetic killer robots, and the rebels against him capture this dead advanced one called Raven - they make him selfaware and he turns against the government. No prizes for guessing who you play...

The game is kind of like Quake, but crossed with MDK as the action isn't from the normal first person view point. Also a departure from Quake philosophy has been made in that there aren't levels as such, but a whole landscape the player is free to

The graphics look very stylised and really quite smart. It's all true 3-D

**Expect grand futuristic** scenery on this scale

roam across. You can complete tasks as and when you want, although the rebels obviously provide you with missions.

You'll be able to complete these in different ways - for example, given a mission to infiltrate a base, you could go storming in all guns blazing through the front entrance... but the cleverer players will find the stealthy "secret tunnel" type back

Mobeus has gone for realism, bigtime - you won't be able to carry eight weapons around as is the norm, you'll have to discard some of them. It sounds like a refreshing new slant to the genre, although the release date has been put back (it should be soon, though).

EarthSiege 3 LUNK. Clomp. Clunk. Clonk... the sound of a hulking great 50 ton Mech approaching at speed is enough to make even the bravest soul fight the urge to fill their breeches. Unless, of course, they happen to be sat in one of these robotic monstrosities as well... Masses of options are promised - EarthSiege 3 will offer the player the chance to fight for one of three factions - the Corporates, the evil Cybrids or the

ARMS PURCHASING MENU

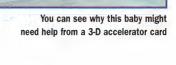
Rebels. You'll be able to fight in a campaign consisting of 45 missions and a huge, evolving plot or alternatively separate one-off random encounters.

Not only will you be able to pilot HERCS, you'll also

be able to drive all manner of other stuff, such as tanks and hovercraft, with over 50 weapons and accessories to bolt on and "cleanse the environment" with (cackle).

The 3-D game engine has also been rewritten, with full texture mapping, light sourcing and gouraud shading, motion capture and advanced physics for animation, and apparently an impressively long ranged visible horizon.

And of course, there will be multiplayer possibilities, over IPX, direct serial link and the Internet. The game is planned to support 3-D accelerator cards such as the 3dFX, and it might need the extra zing judging from the complexity of the visuals. Expectant HERC pilots should buzz Sierra on 01734 303322.



It's not just good looking though, there will still be a hefty strategy/management

# Dark Colony PREMEN

MAGINE the universe two hundred years into the future. Yeah, we've heard it all before, it's kind of a dark affair, and indeed human kind in the form of power and control hungry mega-corporations - has met aliens in its bid for, well, pretty much



The humans defend their base, the edge of which can be seen on the left of the screen

everything. And the aliens ain't all that friendly.

Dark Colony is built along the lines of that stalwart and king of strategy games Command and Conquer (which, let's not forget, was fathered by Dune II). It's a resource management, real

time strategic military game, although it's different in both visual terms, and gameplay nuances.

Instead of employing a top down view, Dark Colony uses a 45 degree isometric angle on the proceedings and the detail on the graphics is fantastic looking, as you can see for yourself.

It's not just a case of one side against the other either, because the human mega-corps have a tendency to meet each other, and not on friendly terms, so some scenarios will see you watching your back as much as the extra-terrestrial scum (who you can also choose to play - should keep Andy happy).



A bloody scrap ensues.... there's plenty of action to be had in Dark Colony

Day and night cycles are fully recreated in the scenarios, and these have huge import regarding strategy, as the aliens are most powerful when the sun's rays aren't sapping their energy - vice versa for the humans.

Naturally, the multiplayer aspect has been considered too, and it will be possible to play over the Internet and local networks against your so-called "mates". A full map designer and scenario editor will add further diversity.

It sounds pretty good to us, anyway. Further questions should be directed at Gametek, on 01753 553445.

## **atlantis: The Lost Tales**

RYO, that slightly weird French development team (weird, surely not?) has a lot of projects planned for this year. The one nearest completion however, is the adventure Atlantis, which immerses the player in the Atlantian legend.

You play Seth, a young

like this to explore resourceful chap who has to travel through time and across five continents in a quest to save the realm. The game will be divided into 100 chapters, so it really is of epic proportions.

If you've ever seen Cryo's previous effort, Versailles, you'll know what to expect visually, because Atlantis uses the same Omni 3-D graphics engine, although naturally it has been

enhanced. It allows you to look around a location in full 360 degree 3-D, both horizontally and vertically. albeit from a fixed point of

3-D sound is also promised, as well as Omni-Sync, which is a system that co-ordinates spoken dialogue correctly with the moving lips of the rendered character who is talking.

More than 50 characters will populate the timelines and various settings of the adventure, a range of intriguing storylines. traditional puzzles and visual "games" are promised.

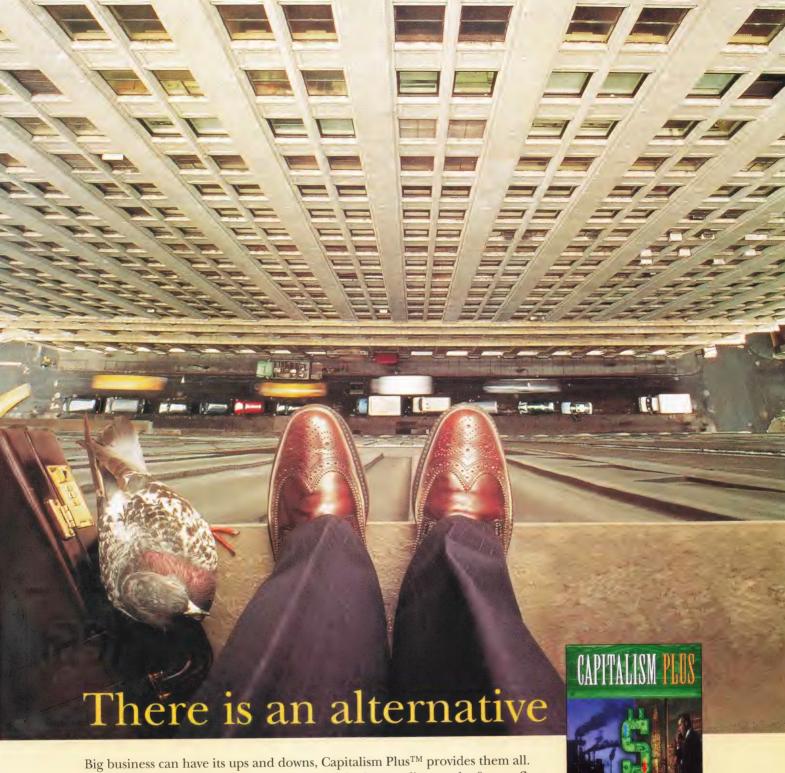
It all sounds pretty smart, and Myst devotees should prepare to get their teeth into something that (should) hopefully rival that classic. Want to know more? Try checking out Cryo's Web site at http://www.cryointeractive.fr



And they all hide a slightly weird and wonderful collection of puzzles

Hmm, there's an absolute

ton of gorgeous locations



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As well as blowing up ground targets, you will also encounter deadly enemy helicopters



**Darren Evans test** flies the latest helicopter flight and fight sim to emerge from the hangers of NovaLogic

OVALOGIC has produced some of the best helicopter flight simulations for the PC. Way back in 1992 the company released the first Comanche game and exposed everyone to the latest in realistic 3-D terrain mapping technology. Snappily titled VoxelSpace, this

utting edge graphics technology duced the most detailed terrain ever to grace flight simulators. Prior to this flight sim games had very flat and uninteresting terrain, save for a few sparse mountains.

computing power and overall processor speed increases, NovaLogic has updated its VoxelSpace technology to version 2. Now flight & fight nuts can do battle over even more detailed terrain. Some of VoxelSpace 2's improvements include smoother textures and further line of sight, not to mention general speed increases and multiple screen mode support.

In all, six screen resolutions are available from standard VGA 320x200 right up to crisp 640x480 SVGA modes. There's also a stereoscopic screen mode for those with the electronic 3-D glasses.

The game is based on the RAH-66 Comanche 3 two-seater aircraft designed to be the world's most survivable and lethal combat helicopter. Its distinctive angular shape reduces the radar signature

making it more difficult to detect than conventional craft. It's also highly computerised with state-of-the-art electronics controlling both aircraft systems as well as offering the pilot and gunner superior weapons and defence capability. In short, this is one lean and very mean bit of military kit.

Once you've entered your pilot name, you are taken to the duty roster. From here you can choose from one of five operations (one training and four combat). The training missions serve to familiarise you with the Comanche's systems in a relatively safe environment.

During each training mission, a training instructor will give you voice instructions throughout. When you successfully complete all training scenarios, you are awarded a medal and can continue on to the real

The four combat operations -Gallant Adventure, Frozen Friendship, Firm Resolve and Desert Endeavour all consist of multiple missions. They each have their own unique terrain and challenges and the object is to complete the missions without getting your butt shot down.

Players of NovaLogic's other flight & fight sim, F22 Lightning II, may notice similarities in the campaigns. But now you can see how well you fare in lowlevel helicopter missions at sub-sonic



This is a screen shot of an external in-game view of your Comanche 3. The model is fully articulated and is one of the most detailed 3-D objects I've seen in a game to date



Some missions include yourself and a wingman who you can give orders to. Here we are in transit to the next objective

This full-screen view shows the night-sight monitor that helps you navigate the terrain during night missions



# SECOND



COMANCHE 3 really does look stunning - the detail is immense, the shading beautiful and the attention to detail is truly awesome. Fortunately, it's not just a looker either, as the range of options and missions is plentiful, including an extensive multiplayer facility.

I've no argument with the high score that Daz has given this, and it most certainly deserves the praise he has heaped upon it. Forget your Longbows and your Hinds - as far as I'm concerned Comanche has recaptured the King of the 'copters title.



Various screen views are available in the game including this rather nice full-screen affair which shows off the real-ting lare nicely

Comanche 3 supports a number of joystick and throttle controllers and can also be played using the keyboard. However, helicopters are tricky beasts to control and a joystick at minimum is essential.

The graphics within the game are spectacular at some of the higher screen modes. Just check out the external screen shots of the Comanche aircraft on these very pages and you'll see there's a lot o detail in there.

The 3-D model of the Comanche is very articulated with landing gear and weapon bays lowering and opening. Even the pilot and gunner turn their heads as they survey the battlefield. In fact it's one of the most detailed aircraft objects I've seen in a sim yet.

NovaLogic has catered for quite a wide range of PCs allowing users to alter detail complexity with ease. You can not only switch to lower resolutions but also vary the detail of the 3-D world around you. As a general guide, on a P133 with a Matrox Millenium 2Mb SVGA video card, the game ran acceptably in 640x400 with the default 3-D detail levels.

Some of the 3-D technology features include translucent smoke and moving clouds, animated cutscenes between missions and realtime lighting effects. If you have a higher speed Pentium, ramp up those detail levels and screen modes for a real treat

As well as stonking visuals, you also get a

veritable sonic feast thanks to the damn impressive audio effects. NovaLogic utilises Dolby Surround Sound technology that adds a new dimension to explosions. Other spot audio effects include helmet chatter ou communicate co-ordinates for artillery as well as comm chatter from your wingman.

Unlike many flight & fight sims, Comanche 3's manual is not a huge tome. It's a concise and very clear 82 pages and is easy to digest.

As with nearly all NovaLogic games, multiplayer support is standard. You can play with up to nine players in IPX network mode, either head-to-head or co-operatively.

Co-operative mode has all the players on the same team with the aim of successfully completing a mission but doesn't allow you to have two opposing teams, which is a shame.

This is one fine game. It has got great looks, handles like a dream and caters for a range of PC speeds thanks to the variable detail levels. If you're looking for a cool helicopter flight sim to test your combat skills, Comanche 3 is up there with the best.



Here's a picture of the real thing. Now you wouldn't want to be in the sights of this sucker, no sireee

Here you can check through your waypoints and examine the terrain you'll be flying over

before each mission

AH-64D Longhow

A superb game with

great attention to

detail. Visuals are

A good simulation of a Russian-built and very deadly helicopter

impressive too Hind Digital

**Electronic Arts** 





the Comanche's nose-mounted machine gun

# INFORMATION

Supplier	NovaLogic
Telephone	0171-405 1777
Price	£39.99
Format	CD-Rom
	10000111 1011

\_486DX4, 16Mb ram, 50Mb hard drive Requirements\_\_\_\_



One of the best helicopter flight and fight sims available for the PC. It looks good and plays

James Anderson chatting to his lovely (but soon to be dead) wife with his daughter in the background

# Outlaws

With chewing tobacco in gob and six shooter in hand, Darren Evans takes on all 'ornery varmints

in LucasArts' Wild West shoot 'em-up

HERE'S no doubting where the inspiration for this game came from. As soon as the music starts, you know the whole atmosphere pervading throughout the game is of Sergio Leone spaghetti western origin.

The music fits the genre superbly too. In fact, Ennio Morricone could have written the game's soundtrack himself, it's simply brilliant. As it is, the game music was written mostly by Clint Bajakian (appropriate name huh?).

It's also quite a revelation to realise that nobody has ever thought of doing a western style 3-D shoot 'em-up before. It's such an obvious concept.

Outlaws relies heavily on its plot and animated sequences because the actual 3-D game engine is pretty much the same as that used in Dark Forces and it's looking a little dated these days. Everything is bitmap (although the general dusty scenery of a western doesn't exactly require very detailed texture maps). These animated sequences are done well though and are very similar in style to Full Throttle.

Character voice-overs are not



This is Matt "Dr Death" Jackson, one of the baddies in the game and a real psycho

"hammy," like you find in many games these days and LucasArts even hired the talents of John De Lancie (who plays Q in Star Trek: Generations) for one of the characters.

Still, even with the dated looking engine, it's a fun blast. The musical score and the animated sequences lift Outlaws above some of the other average 3-D games currently available and you soon find yourself getting into things.

As for the story, well, you play the role of James Anderson, a retired Marshall who finds himself on a trail of revenge after his wife is killed and his daughter kidnapped by bandits working for a ruthless railroad tycoon.

While going after his daughter, Anderson encounters numerous bandidos out to thwart his rescue effort. Each of the levels consists of various locales of typical western fare, such as ranches, mountain hideouts and even a train.

At the end of each level there is invariably a boss bandido whom you have to kill, whereupon an animated sequence starts to further the story. Needless to say, these boss bandidos are generally harder to kill.

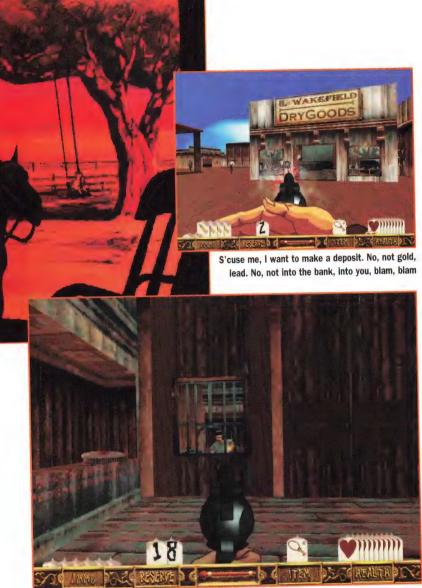
Unlike other games in this genre, you really can't just stock up on armour and health and then go blasting in. The opponents have a much deadlier aim and you can't take too many hits. You therefore have to adopt a stealthier approach, using the terrain and other objects to hide behind as you get in position to pick off the baddies.

The weapons on offer include a bowie knife, your faithful six-shooter, rifle, shotgun, double-barrel shotgun, sawn off shotgun and gattling gun. Oh and the odd stick of dynamite too.

When you run out of ammo, you have to manually reload. This is best achieved by having the right mouse button set up as the reload key. Other objects in the game that help you out are a rifle scope, with which you can pick off opponents from long distance. You also have protective items such as boilerplates, which act as armour, as well as various



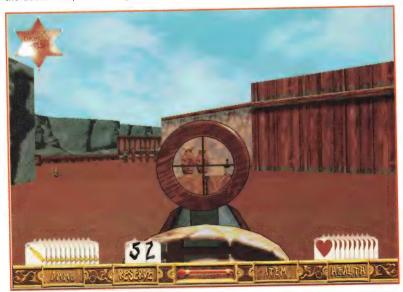
THIS is a bit of a surprise coming as it does from LucasArts. The company rarely releases anything less than the very best and this falls a long way short of that. It's not quite as bad as first impressions suggest and the more you play it the more you get into it, but you can't help but feel that LucasArts realised the game wasn't quite up to scratch so put extra effort into the plot, cut scenes and sound effects. They stop the game from being too average and give you a sense of purpose. However, I have to admit I'm not a fan of this game at all, the look is horribly dated and the gameplay has an odd sort of feel to it, that didn't grab me all. Overall I'd agree with all of Dazze's comments though - now that's a first!



In desperate situations, use super fire with your pistol for Clint Eastwood style fast shooting

strength health items.

Some of the weapons feature two modes of firing. For instance, pressing the super-fire key with the pistol as the active weapon allows you to rapidly fire off shots by "fanning" the hammer, just like you see Clint Eastwood do as he guns down an impossible number of opponents. Unlike in Dark Forces, LucasArts



The rifle scope is great for those long range shots

# The varmints

Here are just a few of the 'ornery varmints you'll encounter in the game. All mean and lower than a rattlesnake's belly

**Bob Graham** The arch-villain of the game and a notorlous gunfighter, gambler and fancy dresser. Poses as

a respectable businessman

Matt "Dr Death" Jackson A ruthless, cold-blooded murderer. Kills with out discrimination or remorse. Works for the highest bidder. Has a taste for classical and biblical quotations

"Spittin" Jack Sanchez A Mexican-American outlaw who favours the twin pistol technique in a fight. Meaner than a rattlesnake and speaks little English

"Chief" Two Feathers Navajo Indian leader. A once noble warrior who turned outlaw after he refused to surrender when his people were rounded up and taken to a reservation

"Henry" George Bowers A dark, quiet man, famed for his ability to hit targets at great range with his rifle. Blames all lawmen for his brother's death

"Bloody" Mary Nash A really mean, nasty woman. One time badgirl and dancer at the Dirty Dog Saloon. Steer well clear

has finally incorporated a very versatile multiplayer option. You can play up to eight players via IPX, or two players via modem. Internet play is also available thanks to the TCP/IP facility. In fact, The Internet multiplayer option is already supported by Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone, which has a special Outlaws area.

Outlaws may not be on the cutting edge of 3-D gaming, but it's an original and well-presented game that's fun to play and should keep you entertained to the end.

# Fidos

Another bitmap 3-D action game with a horror setting. There's a train in this too

Quake GT Interactive Top of the 3-D flesh fests (for the moment) with great texture-mapped graphics

INFORMAT	UN
Supplier	Virgin
Telephone	0171-368 2255
Price	£39.99
Format	CD-Rom
Requirements	486DX 66MHz, 8Mb ram, 61Mb hard drive

A damn fun and playable game but could have benefited from improved 3-D engine. It's also pretty easy to complete



COULTHARD 6 THIS LAP WILLIAMS RENAULT

TAG HEUER Official Timing

The Williams team are really flyin' BERGER 28 TAG HEUER Official Timing

Some lovely water effects

on the Monaco circuit

Irvine stops for an old lady on the Zebra crossing

# Formula 1 (3DFX)

Reviewed by Paul Noel

REMEMBER playing this game on the PlayStation nearly a year ago and being suitably impressed. A superlative racing game, it allowed you to assume the role of a top sports car driver as you took on Damon Hill, Schumacher and co. for the race to be Formula 1 champion.

Well now you can play the game on your PC - providing you've got a 3DFX graphics card that is. It won't run without one. Now I'm a bit cynical of all this 3DFX malarkey. I mean Psygnosis can hardly be blamed for wanting to take advantage of the very latest technology. But just how often are PC owners expected to keep forking out for all these expensive additions to what are already extremely pricey machines? But enough of my soapbox routine.

Assuming you do have the necessary equipment though, what can you expect from this PC version? Well firstly you get super smooth graphics (I'm talking babies bum

right old Herbert if you only finish fifth

You'll feel a

The game offers two modes of play, Arcade and Grand Prix. Arcade really is novice option. It's more like Dodgems or Karting than Formula 1 racing with the game allowing you to go off road, cutting corners, colliding with opponents and so on. It's only on Grand Prix mode that the real challenge comes although initially most will find this mode far too unforgiving. Any mistakes on bends are punished severely and excursions onto the grass or gravel usually result in wild uncontrollable spins and a loss of several places. Persevere though and you soon begin to get to grips with

Throughout all the action your ears are treated (if that's the correct word) to the sonic delights of Murray Walker's commentary. Some of the Walkerisms that appear are superb even though he frequently loses the plot, commenting on incidents such as crashes and collisions that have long since passed. To use one of his own

the handling of your car.

Welcome to Kremlyovskay. Home of the Kremlyovs

phrases "He's a bit off the pace

TAG HEUER Official Timing

5 HERBERT 2 BENETTON RENAULT

What most impresses me about the game, apart from the obviously superb graphics, the fine sound effects and polished presentation, is the speed. So few PC driving games manage to successfully convey the impression of speed. While this may not be perfect, it's certainly a lot more realistic than most

On the downside though the result of all these sumptuous graphics and realistic speed is the degree of polygon clipping that still occurs. Huge sections of scenery frequently pop up in front of you.

While Formula 1 may look more impressive, aided of course by the 3DFX technology, it is far less realistic than the Geoff Crammond masterpiece.

Handling here is much less realistic than in the Microprose game. Cars seem to autobrake when you take your foot off the pedal and this frequently results in collisions due to congested traffic at corners.

The bottom line is that while the PlayStation game was extremely well received but had nothing to compete against, the PC already has the superb F1 Grand Prix 2.

Formula 1 ultimately takes the chequered flag as a distinct runner up to F1GP2, but drives a hard and thoroughly exciting race. If it's a totally realistic drive you crave then stick with F1GP2. But if you've got the clobber (a 3DFX card) and preferably a steering wheel, and are after an impressive looking and slightly more forgiving arcade racer then Formula 1 comes highly recommended. •

F1 Grand Prix 2 Microprose The definitive Formula 1 sim this is as close as any of us will probably get to driving a top F1 car

Screamer 2 Virgin
Superlative driving game with more than a nod in the direction of Sega Rally

are incredibly detailed up close.

smooth here) on both the cars and the tracks, even the advertising hoardings INFORMATION I

Psygnosis Telephone 0151 282 3000 Price CD-Rom Requirements\_ \_P90, 16Mb, 3dFX card, 20Mb HD

Less of a sim than F1GP2, but still an excellent arcade racing game. If you've got the hardware, get the game



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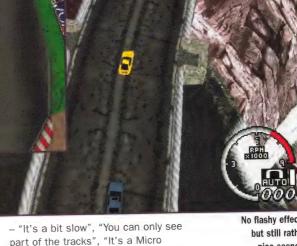


Not bad going eh? None out of eight



Mass pile ups are all part and parcel of Speedster





No flashy effects but still rather nice scenery

# PREDSTE!

# Reviewed by Paul Noel

hey say you never get a second chance to make a first impression, which, in Speedster's case, is a bit of a shame. With a name like Speedster, Psygnosis is making a rod for its own back when your first impression of the game is of a Micro Machines clone with cars that are anything but speedy.

Novice level (the default) sees you driving at such a pedestrian pace that you half expect to see little old ladies on zimmer-frames passing you by. However, it's not until you knock the skill level up to Intermediate and then Professional that Speedster really comes into it's own.

By the time you reach the higher levels, complaints about the lack of speed become redundant. Any faster and it would be impossible to control. What's more, by this stage you realise that, like Micro Machines before it, Speedster has a playability that belies its basic graphics.

The action takes place over eight circuits played either individually as single races or consecutively as part of a championship, with options to do a time trial or race head to

The tracks are varied and there are two classes of cars to choose from -High Performance (Sports) and Heavy Metal (Dune Buggies etc) with further cars becoming available for finishing first in the championship mode.

While Speedster is open to the same criticism as Micro Machines about only being able to see part of the tracks, Speedster compensates by flashing up road signs on-screen a la Sega Rally. These are vital in preparing for the imminent turns and bends in the track ahead.

However, while most of the criticisms Speedster receives from casual onlookers is largely unjustified



Here we see the Heavy Metal cars in action

part of the tracks", "It's a Micro Machines wannabe", what I found a shame is the lack of multiplayer options. Split screen races in Speedster, though fun, are only head to head affairs. The lack of the full quota of cars to race against is noticeable by its absence. Speaking of absences where is the network option? PC games these days are expected to be multiplayer and any that aren't feel somewhat incomplete.

While I'm complaining I might also add that it would have been nice for there to have been some power-ups (turbos and so on) just to spice things up occasionally. It would certainly have given those dissenters a little less to moan about.

The bottom line though is that of all the racing games I have played in the last month or so Speedster, despite its retro appearance, is the one I played the most. What is more it speeds along quite nicely on slower machines. It scores over Micro Machines in that it is less of a stop start affair than the Codemasters classic and over most other racers by actually being fun to play. You can keep your Moto Racers and your Pods and give me this kind of no-nonsense fun every time. •

Micro Machines 2 Codemasters Excellent top down racer and brilliant multiplayer fun

Screamer 2 Virgin
Superb Sega Rallyesque action and one of the few driving games we still play

# INFORMATION

Psygnosis Supplier 0151 282 3000 Telephone Price

CD-Rom Format

Pentium 90, 8Mb ram, 2Mb HD, Win 95 Requirements

At last, a driving game that's fun to play. A shame about the missing multiplayer option



Driving around the city trying to find bombs. Die Hard With a Vengeance

# 0000013000 the airport et. 90 far... all hell breaks loos

# ie Hard Trilog

# Reviewed by Wayne Williams

RUCE Willis, a dirty vest and the phrase "Yippie-Ki-Yay!". Three things you won't find mentioned in this review. Well outside of this intro anyway.

The PC port of the PlayStation hit remains as close to the original as you'd expect it to. Like quite a few conversions from Sony's games console, this version looks similar but isn't quite as impressive graphically as you'd hope for - and you need quite a smart PC to get any kind of decent performance from it. The gameplay remains pretty much the same though.

Die Hard Trilogy is in fact three games in one. No, really it is. The first, Die Hard, is a sort of Tomb Raider-in-an-office-block, the second, Die Harder, is a Virtua Cop wannabee and the third.. wait for it... Die Hard With a Vengeance is a driving game. So three very different game styles, but are they any good? Well...

Die Hard is a third person shoot 'em-up. Armed with a 9mm pistol you have to clear each floor of a 20odd storey building - one floor at a time - by shooting terrorists and

rescuing hostages. There are loads of bad guys and most of them are better armed than you. Just as well then that you can pick-up various power-ups in

the form of extra weapons. health, armour etc.

Once you've killed all the terrorists and freed the captives, a bomb timer starts and you have 30 seconds to make your way to the exit. It's quite fun, but not exactly aweinspiring stuff. Just as well then that there's...

Die Harder. Definitely, the best game of the bunch (ironic since it's the worst movie of the three) this is a Virtua Cop copy, but done brilliantly.

Die Harder is a Virtua Cop wannabee but it's very well done. And very bloody a Vengeance.

The game pretty much runs on a wire, but if you move the mouse around the screen shifts a bit so you do have some slight control.

30

Baddies, marked with a tell-tale target, have taken over the airport and you have to blast them, while avoiding the innocent bystanders. What really makes this section though is the fact that you can blow up literally anything ceiling tiles, monitors, windows - with

some well aimed (or even accidental) shots. Again there are plenty of power-ups. better weapons, rocket launchers, health, etc. Great fun. Then we've got...

Die Hard with

This is basically a fairly simple driving game in which you have to race around a city and find and defuse bombs - all while up against a really tight time limit. And how do you defuse these bombs? By driving into them. At which point they explode. Er... The car can be a tricky to control at first, but you soon get the hang of it.

Of the three games only Die Harder could actually stand on its own. Die Hard is fairly fun, but not outstanding and Die Hard With a Vengeance is, to be honest, pretty bland. Still with three completely different game styles to switch between, and no real turkey anywhere amongst them, this is a nice complete arcade action package which will keep you occupied for quite a while. •

Tomb Raider @ Eidos

the Die Hard section,

only better. And more

Carmageddon • SCi

And this is a bit

like the Die Hard

With a Vengeance

bit. Erm, only better

fun

Well, it's a bit like

RMATION
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ntsP133, 16Mb ram, 50Mb hard

# RATING

A mixed bag, but with one really smart game and two not too bad efforts, there's certainly plenty of fun to be had

drive



Die Hard. And I will do soon if these blokes keep shooting at me.









# Big Bloke. Big Game.

"THE BEST RUGBY GAME I'VE EVER COME ACROSS"
9/10 PlayStation Pro





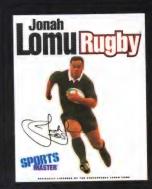






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Try it once and you're converted



The wonders of TNT. I just blew myself a way into this building In the unlikely event that you tire of shooting rednecks...

ALTERNATIVELY
Quake OF OF The Grand
Daddy of all 3-D first person

perspective blasters. Not

game though

much cop as a single player

Duke Nukem 3D WS Gold Great, fun for one player, super as a multi-player game. Duke Nukem remains a fine game despite being overshadowed by Quake

# Have yourself a chew on this ere rifle, Hillbilly boy

EEHAW! Crack open the moonshine, fasten up your dungarees (tightly), and load up your double barrel shotgun cos, courtesy of Interplay, them thar Inbred Redneck varmints are on the Rampage.

This is the latest in a long line of 3-D first person perspective shooters based on the Duke Nukem 3D (Build) Reviewed by Paul Noel

engine. Done poorly these resemble

little more than data discs, done well, and with as much variety as Duke 3D itself had, they can be entertaining if ultimately derivative. Redneck Rampage puts you in the

role of one of two Hickston residents, Leonard or Bubba, as you set about rescuing your prize pig that's been kidnapped by aliens. Okay, so the plot is about as plausible as a Redneck who isn't married to a relative but that didn't stop Quake from being a good game did it?

You get some of the customary weapons such as revolver, shotgun and dynamite, plus new introductions including an alien-arm laser gun that is operated by pulling on the tendons. Powerups come in the form of food and drink, consisting of cow pies, pork rinds, moonshine and whisky, each of which restores your health. Overdose on the latter though and you'll find yourself feeling more than a little sozzled at which point your character becomes almost impossible to control.

The graphics, though sprites, are in 3-D and look a lot less pixilated and blocky than in, say, Blood for example.

The in-game characters whose asses you get to whoop mostly consist of alien cloned townsfolk with characters as the Skinny Old Coot, Billy Ray Jeeter, Sheriff Hobbes, Alien Vixens and Turd Minions (made from alien faeces). These I'm going into

are all well drawn Stanky's Bar and even if not in the Quake league. The levels are

Grill and no redneck's gonna stop me all large and sprawling and the settings for the levels are well themed and help conjure up the atmosphere of being in Hillbilly country where men are men and blokes called Bubba want to get real friendly with you. Squeal piggy, squeal.

A special holler should go to the music in the game. It's all a hooting and a yelling, foot stomping and banjo playing. The music is great, very funny and very off the wall. There's one song which features an outrageous attack on a well known food chain with the line "McD....lds can kiss my butt". With track titles such as "I'm getting drunk with or without you" and lyrics such as "I'm giving you just exactly one minute to find a clean dress and get your ass in it" this fits in excellently with the humour throughout the rest of the game.

The best thing about Redneck Rampage though is that it's fun. Just as Duke Nukem 3D was in fact. If you can ignore the creaky engine and the fact that it's about as original in concept as a Redneck Joke about inbreeding, then I guarantee you will eniov this.

# know you're a Redneck if.

- 1. Your e-mail address ends in over.yonder.com
- 2. Your wife has a beer belly and you find it attractive
- 3. Your brother in law is also your uncle
- 4. Someone in your family says, "Cum'n here 'an lookit this afore I flush it"
- 5. A sign that says "Say No to Crack" reminds you to pull up your jeans
- 6. You thought Ned Beatty was sexy in 'Deliverance'
- 7. You think "loading the dishwasher" means getting your wife drunk
- 8. The quality of your birthday present depends on how 'mama' finishes in the wet T-shirt contest
- 9. You go Xmas shopping for your mum, sister and girlfriend and only need to buy one gift
- 10. You think the last 4 words of the National Anthem are "Gentlemen start your engines'

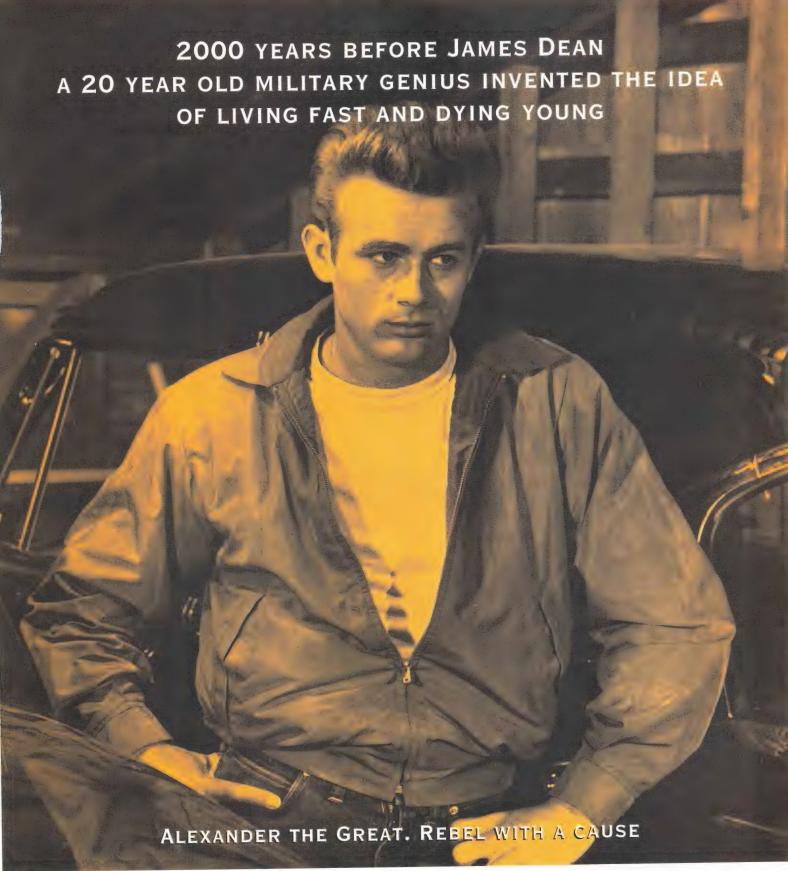
# INFORMATION

Supplier\_ Interplay Telephone 01628 423666 Price £tha Requirements. 486 66MHz, 8Mb ra



Good, clean, Moonshine swigging, Alien blasting, farmyard animal worrying fun. Not great, but worth a look





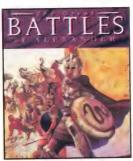






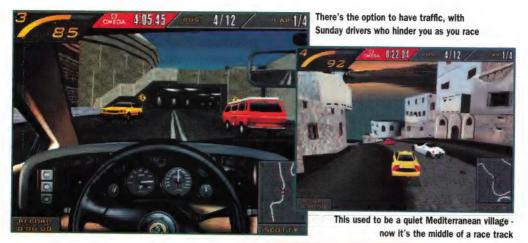






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# The Need for Speed

# Reviewed by Paul Noel

KAY, you know the deal with these driving games by now. The one thing that Sega Rally. Pod and now Need For Speed 2 all have in common, apart from all being driving games of course, is that they all need a monster PC to run properly.

So if the Computer Fairy has just blessed you with a nice meaty MMX then read on - this may be for you. However, if you've only got a Pentium 90 for example (the machine's minimum requirement), forget it. Go on, get lost, turn the page, choose another game - a nice slow moving graphic adventure or something.

Still here? Damn, I guess that

The crashes in Need for Speed 2 are thankfully as spectacular as ever

means I'll have to finish the review.

Okay then, this seguel to the successful and hugely enjoyable Need For Speed features all new cars, boasts a brand new game engine, new tracks and 50 per cent more speed.

Hmm... well let's start with the cars. There's a large selection, from the Ferrari F50 to the

McLaren F1, Lotus Esprit V8 and Jaguar XJ220. The cars all allegedly handle in an authentic manner. although chances are that like me you won't have driven any of the mean machines on offer to be able to decide, so this will not be important.

What is important is how it drives and in truth it's a bit of a mixed bag. The game has an Arcade and a Simulation mode and EA has emphasised the realism of the cars. They handle reasonably well but even on simulation mode feel less realistic than in the original version. Sometimes the physics when you collide with scenery just feels wrong.

Next there's the tracks. This sequel boasts interactive scenery and all new wider roads allowing you to cut corners and even take short cuts, all of which is cool.

However, the supposed realism of the car and driving physics doesn't really sit well with the new surreal

> tracks. They're a mish mash of all types of bizarre and treacherous courses that don't feel as intuitive to navigate as in the original. They all feature lots of impressive yet totally superfluous scenery. I reckon though that EA should have dispensed with all the poncey scenery. windmills, yachts and the like and concentrated on getting a decent performance on lower spec machines. Ooh controversial!

All of this brings me back to my main gripe. I played the game on a P120 in a small window and only then would it run smoothly in hi-res. On full screen in medium and low res it was still sluggish. It's frustrating to sit revving your turbo charged monster only to chug away from the start as though you're in a Lada. Consequently, unless you've got a top spec P200

(wherein the game zooms along nicely) you really do feel the need for speed.

Despite my criticisms this sequel is still fairly enjoyable. It's got a garage full of options, lots of lovely new cars, a reasonably fun splitscreen option and at times makes for a decent race. Even so, in the race to finish in top spot in the driving game genre it gets off to a promising start only to take a wrong turning and finish as an also ran.

# Head to heads are one of the best parts of the game INFORMATION

ALTERNATIVELY
Screamer 2 • Virgin

**Excellent Sega** 

Pod Ubi Soft If

requirements there's

a solid driving game

in here. If you don't,

Rally beater with

edge of the seat

driving thrills

you meet the

there isn't

horrifically high

Supplier Electronic Arts Telephone 01753 549 442 Price £39.99 Format CD-Rom Requirements Pentium 90, 16Mb ram, 40Mb HD, joystick or

On a P200 NFS2 is more of a cruise than a race, on slower machines it doesn't even make it out of neutral



On an icy road the last thing you want is some lunatic lorry driver cutting you up



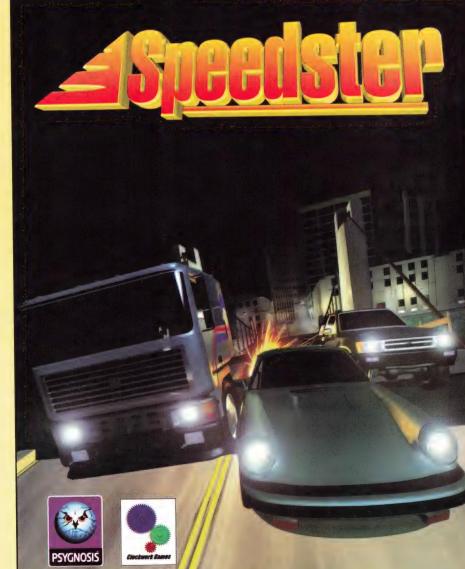
1 OR 2 PLAYER

# PUREL ABOUT RACIO



HEAD

HEAD







Hmm, the stench of spilled innards mixed with the acrid smell of burning rubber, as another unfortunate pedestrian gets a very close look at Darren Allan's wheels... He's Madder than Max

# BITTERE



ODGY. How else could you describe a game in which you get points for running over screaming pedestrians, the more the merrier (combination bonuses for multiple bus queue wipe-outs)? But that's Carmageddon through and through, it's not for the politically correct, that's for sure.

However, if the thought of mowing down all and sundry in a packed shopping mall while cackling wildly and racking up the credits you need for



The sort of massive pile up that generally happens 10 seconds after the start of a race



that brand new titanium reinforced ram-bumper appeals, then you may just enjoy this game. Rather a lot, actually... I know I did.

Carmageddon features a huge, sprawling single player game, with a host of cars, weapons and extras. spread across 35 huge tracks - and when I say huge, I mean it. Then there's the multiplayer game, which is similarly well fleshed out, but for now I'll concentrate on the

solo play aspect.

You choose one of two psychos to play, a maniac bloke or a maniac bird, and to begin with you're ranked 99th crazed killer psycho. The idea is to prove yourself worthy of the number one spot, and the certification and lobotomy that no doubt go with it.

This you do by, well, creaming the hell out of the opposition, along with anyone else who happens to get in the way. No guns are involved, it's pure stock car style action - you waste other drivers by smashing into them so badly that their car ceases to function. Of course, that is also the fate you're trying to avoid at their hands.

Each track or level is a race. Well, officially anyway. There are checkpoints, and there is a race track. Completing the required number of laps in first position will give you a win and you'll accrue some serious dough. But the thing is, there's a timer, and it isn't incremented by passing through the checkpoints.

Extra time is given by hitting bonus pods, which can award power-ups as well as random time bonuses, but the main method of stockpiling time is to smash into your opponents as impressively as possible.

The better the collision, the more

bonus time you'll be rewarded. Shunts and bumps grant 10 seconds leeway. a t-bone might glean 30, spectacular head-ons could grab you a minute, with the ultimate gain being wiping someone out, which generally gains a minute and a half. Also, running over pedestrians gives you a few extra

What all this means is that you have to get involved in quite a lot of Destruction Derby antics even if you want to race. What's more likely is that you'll forget about the race altogether, hare off the track and terrorise every car and ped you see, racking up the notches on the clock. And I gotta admit, that's real fun, and hence the most likely way to win is to wipe out all the other drivers (killing every pedestrian on the map also gets you a win).

Time is not the only consideration, because you've also got credits to

worry about - you get money for those spectacular collisions too. The more you damage the car, the more running repairs you have to do, and it all costs.

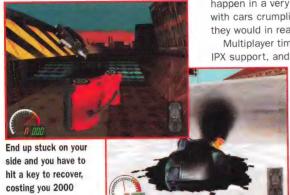
Extra in-race features include the bonus power-ups, which range from everything from super damage magnifiers and turbos to weird kit like lunar gravity and drugs (hmm, psychedelic man).

After the race, you spend credits on upgrades to your car's armour, engine and offensive capabilities, as long as you've made a profit (you get a substantial sum for winning). Hopefully, your rank improves from 99 too, and you get access to more tracks as you climb the rank ladder.

Visually, Carmageddon is pretty tasty to say the least, even in VGA -SVGA is incredible, but also very machine intensive. The cars look smart, the scenery is very varied and never dull... it's really very cool indeed in the looks department.



The extras in Tarrantino's new driving film were paid plenty of danger money



Well, it's not looking good for this chap, or the local birds (the tweet tweet variety that is)

Loads of extra little touches impressed me even more, the smoke belching from a wheelspin, sparks flying from your car as you scrape it along a wall... and the sound is decent too, a variety of squishing and smashing noises, plus tasteless bits of speech from the driver.

precious credits

The most impressive single thing about the game engine, however, is the physics. I can't stress how accurate they feel - big pickups rock dead realistically on their massive suspension and massive pile-ups

happen in a very authentic manner, with cars crumpling as you'd imagine they would in real life. Smart.

Multiplayer time! Yep, full Net and IPX support, and a variety of different

ways of playing. Standard play involves trashing the opposition and accumulating frags Quake-style, but there are also races (last through the checkpoint is eliminated).

Better still, there's extra variety with tag (whoever is

"it" has a timer counting up, and when it reaches a certain time they're out), and fox and hounds, which is the same but the idea is you want to be "it"

So it's pretty smart, yeah? Definitely, but I've got a few niggles I feel the need to air. The steering is a tad sluggish when going forwards, and stupidly sensitive in reverse, which annoyed me a lot at times.

And the update horizon with the graphics is a bit close at times on the normal graphic detail levels... but the



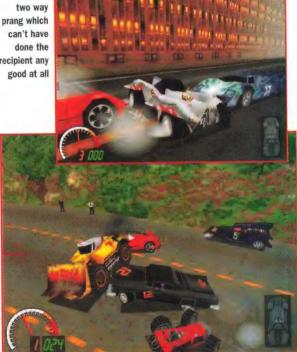
I'm not a big fan of car racing games. Just speeding along negotiating corners and simply trying to beat the driver in front is somewhat uninteresting for me, but when you get to do such things as mow down pedestrians with abandon, well, it makes all the difference. Carmageddon is true to its name with a manic and crazed atmosphere to the whole proceedings. It's a killer of a car game (quite literally) that's hugely fun to play. I pretty much agree with Daz A's opinion, so if you're looking for a way to vent your road rage, this is the game for you.

most annoying thing is the camera angle, which swings round when you go into reverse - occasionally this is handy, but more often than not you want to still see what's in front of you. I couldn't set it to stop doing this either.

Still, this only slightly mars what is a fine game in both single and multiplayer modes, a good example of a well executed, superb design concept and they are few and far between these days. •

**Destruction Derby 2** Psygnosis Another smash and trash racer, fairly inoffensive but by no means great Screamer 2 Nirgin An alternative for those who'd rather have a pure arcade racer, which has a decent multiplayer facility too

Kerrunch! A two way prang which can't have done the recipient any



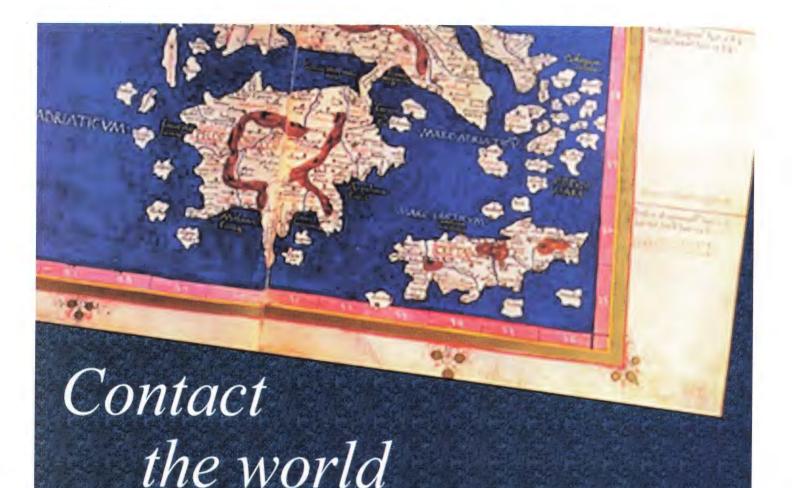
Some of the vehicles you really don't want to tangle with, like that huge dumpster

# INFORMATION

Supplier SC 0171 585 3308 Telephone Price f.tba CD-Rom Format Pentium 75MHz, 16Mb ram, 30Mb hard drive Requirements

Road-kill carnage and fender bending on a scale never seen before. It's dead smart, and close to classic status





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Arsenal prepare tactics for what will be a tough pre-season clash with Bayern Munich



A commentary on the match with graphical highlights was my preferred method of watching



# Premier Manager 97

# Reviewed by Darren Allan

OAH! I don't know, what happened to Premier Manager 4, 5 and all the other ensuing numbers before 97? Gremlin just can't count. Anyway, my imbecilic attempts at humour aside, it's the latest footy management game - so the big question has got to be, how does it compare with that stalwart of the genre Championship Manager 2?

One thing that struck me immediately is the flexibility that the game offers in terms of different ways to play. You can either play a straightforward standard management game, where you can choose any team in any division, or the very realistic pro-manager game.

In this you are given a choice of team in the third division, with a season aim, such as to avoid relegation, or finish mid-table. If you don't meet this goal (pun not intended I assure you), then you'll be sacked. Do well, however, and bigger and better clubs may take an interest in you. Essentially it's a proper career sim.

Then there are four different options which govern the amount of control the player is given. The first is a pure trainer mode, in which you deal solely with the team and tactics, none of the financial side, and then there's the slightly strange accountant's game, in which you only deal with finance.

Most people will probably plump for the standard manager's option, in

which you do everything except for the finicky business of contract renewal. Those who want to deal with that, however, can choose total control, in which you brave every aspect.

The main screen is divided into four quarters, which deal with the squad, finance, transfers and results. It's all pretty self-explanatory stuff which will be familiar to those with previous experience of footy management games.

So what are the distinguishing features of PM97? For starters, the



A useful lofted ball into the box

transfer market is very "tight", as in there aren't that many players up for grabs (unlike in CM2, where you tend to get a thousand plus to wade through at any given time). However, you can make offers for anyone of course, and pluck some unsettled talent for the right money.

Tactics are well implemented too, with a range of different styles and formations - you can modify formations to a fine degree too. Players are rated for an extensive range of skills, so there's plenty of

fine-line decision making to be done.

Perhaps most striking, however, is the way Gremlin has gone for a graphic style of match representation. What's most impressive is that it works, largely.. it builds up tension quite well. It must be said, though, that sometimes defending looks so poor it's unreal (players floating off into nowhere leaving key strikers unmarked, or missing what should be simple tackles), and the keeper is prone to making idiotic mistakes too. On the whole, however, footy matches have never been better represented in a management game.

Finally, also worth mentioning is the extensive database, with in-depth facts and figures on the clubs and top players, which rounds off a complete package. I'm not sure it's a CM2 beater, but it's definitely a challenger to the crown, delivering plenty of depth, playability and relatively smart game-day graphics. •

Championship Manager 2 DEidos Well, this needs no introduction, the benchmark footy manager game on the PC Kick Off 97 Maxis If you want action rather than thought, then check out this gem from Maxis

Supplier	Gremlin
Telephone	0114 275 3423
Price	£tba
ormat	CD-Rom
Requirements	486 66MHz, 8Mb ram, 23Mb hard drive
RATING	
	Zerything you could possibly want, including
	match-day thrills from the dug-out. A serious



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# **Sentient**

# **Reviewed by Darren Evans**

ENTIENT is a sci-fi adventure from Psygnosis that has you wandering around a space station solving puzzles, all in 3-D. You play the role of a space station engineer called Garrit Sherova, who is sent to the ailing Icarus Mining platform to prevent it colliding with the Sun. However, after crash landing, you soon find things are more complex than they first seem.

When I saw Sentient in development, I was impressed with its technical features. Characters had a life of their own and the Al was quite complex as



The interface is somewhat clunky and slow and the mouse moves erratically. Generally issuing commands, talking to people and manipulating objects is frustrating

the characters interacted and reacted to your investigation and probing questions. With over 200 locations to explore across 12 decks of the space station and a quite novel plot, it all looked like a promising adventure game

Unfortunately, the final release suffers from flawed game mechanics and a clunky and slow interface that is frustrating to use. Searching the area for clues as well as speaking to characters involves selecting various actions from a tacky box of options with a mouse that is very jerky and slow over the screen

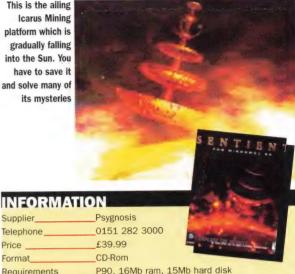
Also, the audio system is terrible. Sound effects don't seem to play back properly, cutting in and out of volume. The FMV playback code is awful too with blocky and slow animation. Maybe the development team should check out Smacker for their future games.

The game always starts in a window and if you want DirectX full screen mode, you have to re-select it every time you play. All in all, it's a quite a let down, after what seemed like a promising game. •



The 3-D game engine and graphics are adequate. The characters' A.I. and the way they go about their own husiness is also impressive

This is the ailing Icarus Mining platform which is gradually falling into the Sun. You have to save it and solve many of its mysteries



RATING

Requirements

Supplier

Price

Format

Telephone

A disappointing adventure game which could have been much, much more, but ended up less, less, less

# Reviewed by Paul Noel

THAT'S the deal with all these poncey acronyms for game titles these days? We've had MDK, MAX, KKn'D, SWIV, AMOK and now the equally pretentiously titled Q.A.D. or Quintessential Art of Destruction. But we won't hold the title against it (much).

So what's the game about then? Well it's a futuristic tactical combat game which requires you to fly your craft around a planet rescuing hostages while an opponent attempts to do the same. Hostages are rescued



Uh oh. My shields are down and these guys look menacing

via pods - you collect these from factories, drop them near the hostages and then return to your base. Your craft and pods can be beefed up with meatier weaponry with which to fend off your opponent, and the various hostile enemies on the

Q.A.D.'s sprite based 3-D engine allows for lots of enemies on screen at once. However it has to be said that in this day and age of 3-D polygon engines, Q.A.D's pixel based sprites look rather outdated even if there are loads of them. The hostages, for example, look like little Lemmings and I don't mean the new 3-D Lemmings. I'm talking about the original blocky 2-D variety.

If you persevere and progress through some of Q.A.D's later levels you unearth some of its finer points, the tactical to-ing and fro-ing, stealing of your opponents hostages, setting booby trapped pods, and the like. All of which greatly adds to your



enjoyment. Beneath the garish exterior there's undoubtedly a decent game struggling to get out. But it's ultimately a tough struggle as Q.A.D. is buried beneath a messy mass of blocky pixelated sprites and dated visuals.

Supplier Phillips 0171-911 3161 Telephone Price CD-Rom Format Requirements

P90, 16Mb ram, 25Mb hard disk



It's a playable if somewhat average shooter. A bit like Scorched Planet meets erm...Scorched

# Magic: The Gathering

# Reviewed by Darren Evans

ASED on the massively successful (in the US anyway) card game, Magic: The Gathering from Microprose is a very ambitious attempt at fusing Magic's unique gameplay and strategy into a

Largely, Microprose has succeeded. The actual card game mechanics have been accurately reproduced with a competent AI to challenge even the mightiest Magic player.

The strategy is complex to learn so an FMV tutorial has been incorporated into the package, in which two wizards in flowing robes take you through the basic turns that make up the game. You also get a hefty manual which offers even more detailed instruction.

One of the most impressive aspects of the card game is the awesome artwork on the cards themselves. The designers at Microprose have done a great job at incorporating great computer artwork onto the cards and you really need to be in at least 16-bit colour to appreciate it.

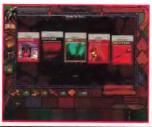
The game consists mainly of two parts. Shandalar is a world in which

you move your character around exploring the various areas of interest. Along the way you will encounter opponents.

Upon meeting an opponent, the game launches into the second part, the actual card game mechanics. This works quite well but my only two gripes are that the actual card section is a little slow and fiddly.

Also, the overall exploration section is somewhat devoid of decent animation. As it is, you are left with the impression that the exploration section is a not quite finished aspect to the game.

Still, it's an enjoyable magic romp and much better than Acclaim's version of similar name.



As you explore, you may come across powerful cards for sale or for free



This is your view of Shandalar, where you will encounter various opponents and visit numerous locales





RATING

(International

A great implementation of the card game, A little slow and clunky in parts though

# hampions League

# Reviewed by Paul Noel

OOTBALL'S a funny old game. Which is appropriate, because UEFA Champions League is a funny old football game as well.

Based on the Champions League (strangely enough) it has a smart and highly polished front end with a nice team selection screen featuring actual photos of all the players.

The funny bit starts when you play it. The players are quite detailed and feature some lovely motion capture and animation. But the whole engine



Porto are up against it. 2 - 1 down to Dortmund at home

is so damned slow that you end up ruing the animation. Who needs glorious frames of your player receiving the ball and turning if, when he turns, he turns like a battleship?

Also present are the same interminably slow sliding tackles that were a feature (and flaw) of Actua Soccer and are equally frustrating here. Add to this the fact that the only effective way to win the ball is by a sliding tackle - something which frequently results in a booking or sending off.

The controls are simple enough in theory, but so basic as to prove limited during play. Some players quite obviously run faster than others with the quite ludicrous situation that some players travel like snails and others run like Ben Johnson after being asked to take a drugs test. The goalkeepers meanwhile all make David James look brilliant.

UEFA is a funny old game because it's a parody of how footy games



Nice graphics, shame about the speed

Superstar Soccer) on the N64 is a perfect example of how

to create a decent game of football on a console and there's no real reason why this can't be done on the PC. This is not even in the Endsleigh league, let alone the Champions League of footy games and is a perfect example of a brilliant licence wasted.

INFORMATION MPIONS Telephone 0171 911 3161 Price £tba CD-Rom P90, 8Mb ram, 10Mb hard disk

RATING

A polished front end and a great licence, cannot hide a sluggish engine and an ultimately frustrating game



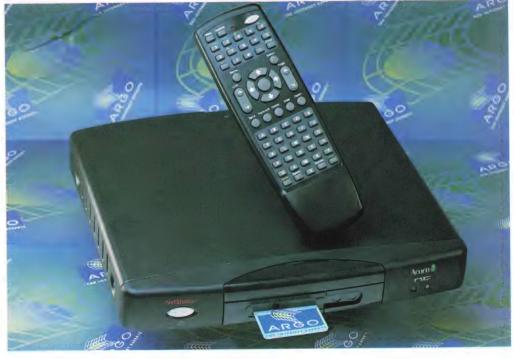
# e Internet Experts

HE Argo Interactive Group plc, based in Chichester in West Sussex, is an innovative producer of Internet and educational products. Founded eight years ago, the Company has been involved with many new developments and has an impressive range of clients including Mitsubishi, BG (British Gas), the BBC, Acorn and Oracle.

Over the last two years Argo has concentrated many of its resources on the development of Internet related products. ArgoNet, the Internet Service Provider, was launched in August 1995 with a brief to concentrate initially on the Acorn market place and has been very successful in attracting home and educational users. Now ArgoNet has widened its appeal and is currently the only UK company offering Internet connection and services for all four computer platforms: IBM compatibles, Apple Macintosh, Acorn and the new generation of Network Computers.

With the rapid growth in the use of the Internet, Argo is ideally placed to provide all the services and support required by new and experienced users alike. For existing computer users who want to get onto the Net, Argo has put together a special 99 Starter Pack which includes three months unlimited time on-line with ArgoNet, access software and a fast external 33.6 modem. And because ArgoNet's basic philosophy is to provide an all-inclusive service, there is a fixed monthly charge from only £11.75 which includes 100 per cent local UK telephone call rates, technical support, up to five E-mail addresses and 5Mb of Web space. There are no hidden extras.

One of the most exciting new products being launched in the UK this year is the Network Computer. The Argo team is involved with several different UK manufacturers in developing and supplying the software and server technology to enable the new Network Computers to operate across the Internet. Because a Network Computer



uses a network to store and access information, the connection through ArgoNet provides the essential link to a wealth of services for home-based Network Computers in particular.

As well as doing development work for these new Network Computers, the Argo Group is selling the newly launched Acorn NetStation complete with connection to ArgoNet. The launch price of only £499 includes the computer, infrared controller, cable to connect to a TV or video and three months on-line.

Yet another development that Argo is associated with is the portable and flexible Iomega zip drive. Argo has produced software which allows the same 100Mb zip disks to be read by Acorn and Windows PCs, which can be very useful especially for schools. And with the zip drive plugging into the printer port of most PCs and into the new NetStation from Argo, an incredibly versatile and expandable hard disk solution is now available at an affordable price.

To fund the Group's expansion, Argo Interactive Group plc raised more than £300000, mainly from small investors keen to share in Argo's success, by a public share issue last September. Argo was the first company in Europe to raise funds using the Internet, and it has now launched a second public share offer also using the Internet - details are on the Web at www.argonet.co.uk/shareoffer2 - and you should act quickly if you are considering making an investment.

Argo is an innovative and dynamic UK company at the leading edge of technology developments. With an expanding range of products for home, business and education the Argo Interactive Group is one of a new generation of British companies we shall be hearing much more about. You may contact them on freephone 0500 585 586, by fax on 01243 815 805 or by e-mail at info@argonet.co.uk.

# **d**xelerator

ACING games that just have you

dashing around a track in a bid

to be first are somewhat boring

these days. Give me a vehicle armed

to the teeth with big guns and gizmos

with which to blow the guy in front of

Axelerator is one such racing

rampage game and certainly stands

cool. Unlike other racing games you

also get a good impression of speed

as the track-side objects whizz by.

to kit your car out with such as a

And we're airborne at one of the many

jump sections on the track. Oh bugger,

looks like I'm not gonna make it

out of the crowd. Graphically, it's pretty

There are plenty of anarchy add-ons

3/8 1/5 0 059 m 4 1:07.04 01:09

you out of the way any day.

# Reviewed by Darren Evans

some auto anarchy gattling gun, rockets and other devices such as oil slick, nail and ball-bearing dispensers, tyre slashers and suction

Here's a view from the

There are various cars to choose from too which vary in power from the tracks, either poor driving on your part as you take a corner too fast or hit other cars will inevitably damage your car. Or you may find yourself in the sights of an opponent's weapon and take a few bullets up the

Either way, you can pull into the pitgarage. The garage is also where you kit your car out with aforementioned

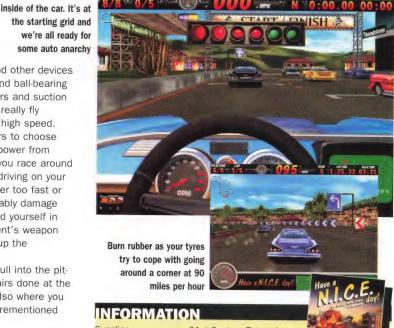
The best fun comes in multiplayer gameplay where you can pit your driving, and shooting, skills against up to eight other players. LAN, modem and Internet multi-play options are supported.

devices to allow you to really fly around tight corners at high speed.

350HP to 2500HP. As you race around backside.

stop and get some repairs done at the

If you enjoy the race and rampage game genre, Axelerator is certainly worth a look.



Supplier	21st Century Entertainment
Telephone	01235 851852
Price	£39.99
Format	CD-Rom

486 DX4 100, 8Mb ram, 30Mb HD

A fairly fun racing mayhem game with a good multiplayer option where you can pit your wits against other drivers

# Puzzle Bobble

# **Reviewed by Paul Noel**

AKE your basic Tetris recipe, add a liberal sprinkling of bubbles, some cutesy graphics, a pinch of twee music and, most importantly, a generous helping of addictive gameplay and what do you end up with? Well in this case Taito has done just that and the dish it has cooked up is Puzzle Bobble.

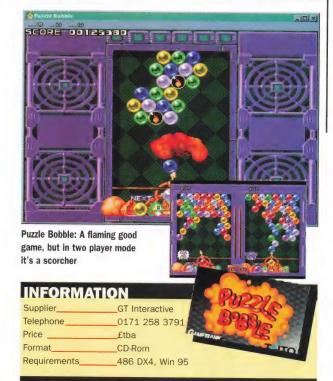
The game is played almost like an upside down version of Tetris in that you fire coloured bubbles up the screen. Connect three or more bubbles of the same colour together to make them fall, and with them all the bubbles they were supporting.

The game has several modes, a single player (sad loner mode) and a challenge mode where you must clear your screen against the clock. However the only real way to play Puzzle Bobble is against an opponent of reasonably similar skill in two player mode - then you have one of the most addictive substances next to crack cocaine and oxygen.

There's also a network option, although if your mates are anything like the philistines I have to work with you'll have difficulty convincing them to look beyond the cute graphics and basic puzzle nature to what is a storming game beneath.

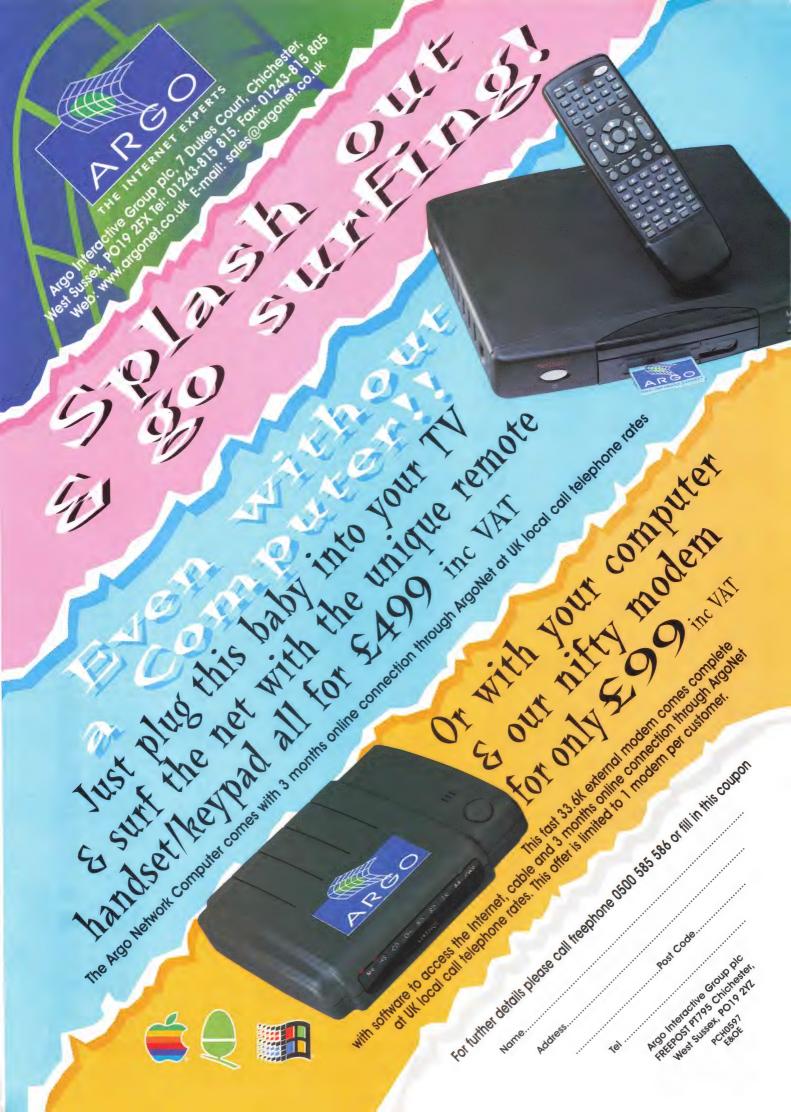
However there are criticisms. Having played the sequel (Bust a Move 2) to death on the PlayStation (which was superb) I must admit to being disappointed with this version. The lack of a two player game against the computer is a major omission which is thankfully corrected in the sequel, but that begs the question why didn't they bring the sequel straight to the PC?

Also some of the special power bubbles such as lightning and fireballs do not quite work hence their omission from the later sequel. But even though these criticisms burst my bubble somewhat, a two player game of Puzzle Bobble is still a truly classic gaming moment. •



RATING

Puzzle Bobble is a great game, particularly against a mate (or enemy), but roll on the superior sequel



# Pinball Power Pack



One of the politically correct tables on Pinball Illusions

"HOSE deaf. THOSE usar, dumb and blind kids at 21st Century (no offence) have rereleased five of the company's previous pinball games in a new Pinball Power Pack, proving that they're not mean when it comes to giving you mean Pinball games.

The titles are Pinball Dreams 1 and 2, Pinball Fantasies, Pinball Mania and Pinball Illusions. If Pinball games are your bag then you should be able to find your favourites among

the 20 tables on offer. However, if you think Pinball games belong in the arcades and the pubs then you're unlikely to be converted by this package.

Some of the games featured are looking decidedly long in the tooth today but all in all this is quite good value, even if only a couple of the titles really score the Jackpot. - PN

INFORMAT	ION
Supplier	21st Century
Telephone	01235 851852
Price	£tba
PATING	0/10/



Luke waves his lightsabre around, BZZZZZZ

# **Yoda Stories**

Fyou thought playing Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures was a tedious experience, wait till you get to grips with this Star Wars based follow-up. You are Luke Skywalker (natch) and the game has you locating Yoda on Dagobah, and then heading off to one of three different worlds to fight Imperial stormtroopers, meet droids, pick up items and solve some simple puzzles, all presented in a sort of top down manner.

Every time you play Yoda Stories a new world is generated, so in theory every game is different. In practice though, every game is boring. Wander round each world (made up of 20 or so screens), bump into poorly animated characters, all while generally having a miserable time.

OK, so it's only £15 and will probably provide you with a mildly amusing quarter of an hour the first time you load it up, but you'd have to be pretty sad to want to spend any longer doing Yoda's bidding. - WW

INFORMATION Lucas Arts Telephone 0171 368 2255 Price £15 RATING



Lomax uses his magic hat to good effect

UST when we thought we'd gotten rid of those mad, mad, kamikaze-like Lemmings they're back in an all new adventure. This time though it's a platform game and you must guide Lomax the Lemming through 40 levels of mayhem.

All new Lemming abilities for tackling enemies include jumping, spinning and

throwing your magic hat boomerang

The graphics are wonderfully drawn and beautifully animated. There are some excellent effects with sprites zooming from the background to the foreground, and there is a rich musical score throughout.

The game plays in a window under Windows 95 and although there's a choice of sizes, only the smallest ran smoothly on my Pentium 120. Oh, and it's all very cute, perhaps a bit too cute. But these are my only gripes about what is otherwise a nice looking, fairly enjoyable, if ultimately unoriginal platform romp. - PN

# INFORMATION Supplier\_ Gremlin Telephone 0114 275 3423 £34.95

# actua Soccer (Club Edition)



All new team sheets and player stats are present in Actua Soccer Club Edition

NE Actua Soccer. There's only one Actua Soccer. One Actua Soccer.... Erm except that there isn't of course. With this edition I make it a hat trick of rehashes for Gremlin's soccer game and might I suggest that it's all wearing a bit thin?

This latest incarnation allows you to play as any of the current English Premier League clubs, and play either a practice match, a friendly, or a full Premier League season. And that's about it.

Okay, it has some added lines from Barry Davies to improve what was already the superlative football commentary but these features hardly justify the full price tag.

However, it is up there with the best of footy games and

if you don't own the first game then this is worth a try. Even so I reckon Gremlin is flogging a dead horse with this one. I thought this game was all over after the Euro 96 edition. Surely it

INFORMAT	ION
Supplier	Psygnosis
Telephone	0151 282 3000
Price	£tba
RATING	74%

is now. - PN

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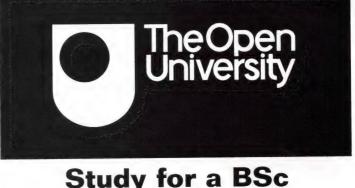
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Stuck in DWII? Well have no fear, let Neil John Mackintosh help you out with the final part of our complete walkthrough. There's some help for Blood addicts too

# ACT 2: Come Die With Me - continued

RETURN to Ankh-Morpork and go to the docks. Use the sticker on the weight and then the weight on the hook. Push the weight through the wall to give you the second quest item - a set of novelties. Go to the Unseen University dining hall and use the basket on the food. Go to the university garden and collect all the croquet hoops. Return to Djelibeybi and enter the shop. Talk to the architect to discover the secret of time and pyramids. Take the poster. Go to the market place and talk to D'Blah.

Talk to the Rock Seller about candy rock. Talk to Uri Djeller about the jingle. He will tell you about the hermit and a cartwheel will appear on the



With the help of the librarian you can do a rather, erm, impressive horse impression

main map. Speak further to Uri to gain information about a prospector who knows the location of the fountain of youth. Use the hoops on Uri to give you wire. Use

the wire on the plans to get a pyramid. Go up and take the stake. Go to the cartwheel and talk to S.T. Ungulant who agrees to give you a jingle if you can answer the question "Why?".

Return to Holywood and enter the castle. Speak to the dwarf and give her the ring in exchange for the horse suit. Return to Ankh-Morpork and go to the morticians. Tell Casanunda about the desert women and he leaves. Ask the witch about the Elven Queen and a forest will appear on the main map. Go to the University dining hall and talk to the librarian about the horse suit. Get the librarian and use him on the horse suit. Go to Bonedie Beach, Use the glue on the surf board and use the board on the surf. Enter the cave and use the camera on the cave paintings. Take the film of the sheep's ancestors.

Return to the beach. Use the picnic basket on the anthill and get the ants. Return to Ankh-Morpork and go to the High Energy Facility in the University. Use the basket of ants on HEX. Use the pot of honey on HEX. Now talk to Skazz about the question. He will explain that HEX will take its time. Use



The fountain of youth. Not very impressive is it?

the pyramid on HEX and talk to Skazz again about the question. You will then get the answer. Go to the University garden and plant the stake in the compost heap. When the Suffrajester has tied herself to it, take her. Use the glue on the hooter and the sticky hooter on the horse suit to get a unicorn suit. Go to the forest and put the camera and the unicorn suit in Rincewind's inventory.

Enter the stone circle and use the suit on Rincewind. After a cut scene you will be in the Elven Queen's lair. Use the camera on the Queen to get a film of her. Leave and return to Dielibeybi. Go to the wall at the top of the village and use the Suffrajester in the hole. After the stoning, take the candy rock and the rope. Go to the cartwheel and give the hermit the answer. He will give you the third quest item - the jingle. Return to Holywood. Give the candy rock to the security troll who will complain of a sore tooth. Use the rope on the troll to get the tooth.

Enter the trailer and give the tooth to the milkmaid. This will give you the fourth quest item - a babe. Go to the Dibbler and give him the novelties, babe, jingle and band. Go to the make up girl and give her the Eleven Queen's photographs. She will give some back. Go to the Dibbler again and, after a cut scene, he will say he needs a stunt double for Death. Return to Ankh-Morpork and use the death certificate to gain entry to the Undead Club. Open the closet and talk to the Black Sheep. Offer him the job of stunt double and give him the photographs to enable him to do so.

After some more cut scenes, you will be in the projection room with a very displeased audience outside. Take the reel and use it on the device. Use the photographs of the Elven Queen you have left over on the device and then use the new reel on the projector. Another cut scene takes you to act 3

# **ACT 3: The Grim** Rincewind

IN this Act, you must satisfy Albert of four things - a booming voice, a black robe, prowess with a scythe and horsemanship. First, go to the stable and take the rope. Go to the house and take the key from under the mat. Enter and take the scythe and curtains from the hall. Go upstairs and left and take the ink-well from the desk. Go to the bedroom and take the rabbit and the string. Return to the office and pull the cord.

Run quickly to the kitchen and get the sugar bowl. Go to the library and take Rincewind's biography. Open the alcove door with the skeleton key. Return to the kitchen and, after taking the oily rag and opening the pot bellied stove, speak to Albert. Show him the scythe and he will ask you to reap the cornfield nearby. Go outside and use the boomerang on the rope. Now use this on the chimney.

Climb up and speak into the chimney, the booming voice. Go to the stable and give the horse the sugar. Now use the glue on the saddle and use the saddle on the horse. Now use Binky and you will have proved your horsemanship. Go to the garden and light the rag with the matches. Open



Suffrajester could come in rather handy later on



"Erm, yes, I was wondering if you could help me?"

the rabbit and use the night-gown on Rincewind. Use the lit rag on the hive/bees and take some wax. Use the empty pot on the hive to get a pot of honey. Use the string on the wax to make a candle and light it with the matches. Go to the pond and take the fishing rod.

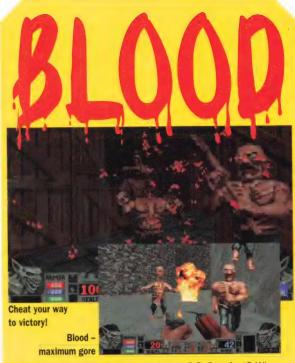
Use the honey pot on the rod and then use this on the pit. This will give you the ant souls. Return to the pond and use the ink on it. Now use the curtain on the pond to give you your black robe. Speak to Susan and give her your biography. She will demand a book from the alcove. Go to the alcove and use the lit candle on it. Take the tablet and return to Susan. Give her the tablet in exchange for the cart. Use the scythe on the cart and go to the cornfield. Use the reaper on the corn and return to Albert. Speak to him and he will now tell you to fetch him 100 souls. Give him the ant souls. Following some cut scenes, Act

# **ACT 4: Till Death Us** Do Part

AFTER the initial scenes, go to Bonestock and take the cork from the hat. Go to Djelibeybi and wait around the hitching rail. The prospector will appear and go into the village. Take the canteen from his saddle-bags and put the rotten arm in the saddle-bags. Wait and then follow the prospector on the map until The Fountain Of Youth appears on the main map. Go there and use the cork on the fountain. Now use the hour-glass on the sand. After some cut scenes, the epilogue will

# **EPILOGUE: Queen** Kong

EXAMINE the raven. Talk to the witch about the raven and once she drops it, take the broom. Talk to the Dibbler and get the bladders. Use the canteen on the bladders then put the bladders in Rincewind's inventory. Now use the broom on Rincewind and after some cut scenes, the final credits will roll.



HAVING trouble with Blood, the latest 3-D Gorefest? Why not try out these cheat codes to make your life just that little bit easier?

> BUNZ All Weapons, Ammo and Guns Akimbo

**CALGON** Level Warp

CAPINMYASS Disable God Mode

COUSTEAU 200 health. Scuba suit

EDMARK Displays "Those were the days"

**EVA GALLI** Toggle Clipping

FORK BROUSSARD No Ammo, Armour or Items. 1

Health, Delirium

**FUNKY SHOES** Super-Jump

GOONIES Gives you the full map of the

level

**GRISWOLD** All Armour

HONGKONG Same as "Lara Croft"

I WANNA BE LIKE KEVIN God Mode

IDAHO All Ammo & Weapons

JOJO Delirium

**KEYMASTER** All Keys

**KEVORKIAN** Suicide

KRUGER Sets you on fire. Displays

"Flame Retardant"

LARA CROFT All Weapons & Infinite Ammo.

Displays "Lara Rules"

MCGEE Sets you on fire. Displays

You're Fired"

MONTANA All Ammo, Weapons and Items

**NOCAPINMYASS** God Mode

**ONERING** Invisibility

RATE Displays current frame rate

SATCHEL All Items

SPIELBERG Level Warp. Disables all cheats

SPORK 200 Health

**STERNO** Temporary Blindness

TEQUILA Guns Akimbo

VOORHEES Displays "I will not cheat, I will not cheat" and if repeated "I am a compulsive cheater'



Bloaty headed fools and tricky blood transfusions giving you grief? Aspiring Doctors will find some useful games tips here...

Having problems with the latest humorous sim from Bullfrog? It looks simple but achieving the results can sometimes be more difficult than you'd think

# **General tips**

The first thing you need to do is plan. Think where to put all the various rooms and items. Getting people in, diagnosed, cured and out as quickly as possible is the name of the game when it comes to making a profit. So place the receptionist near the entrance, with your GP's office nearby. The diagnosis rooms should be a bit

further away, and then the cure rooms. You can put research and staff rooms out of the way, but remember toilets need to be easily accessible.

The game will offer different qualities of staff - try and snap up the best ones as soon as they become available. As the game progresses decent staff will become fewer and those available less

skilled, so plan ahead. Surgeons are always hard to come by and psychiatrists will become rarer as time goes by. Be sure to train doctors as this will make them better at their jobs and they'll still be relatively cheap.

One of the first things you'll notice when playing the game is that patients are a miserable lot. You can improve their mood by making sure they have somewhere to sit and that the hospital is nice and warm. Adding corridor items will make for a better atmosphere - plants improve moral and fire extinguishers will also help to keep machine degradation in check. Keep room queues to a minimum (point the cursor over the door of a room to see how long the queue is) by building more rooms of the same type as those which are proving popular. If you have queues over three patients long the greater is the chance of some of them dying. Also make sure you have quite a few GP offices as these are vital to your success.

# Level 1

You shouldn't have too many problems here. Start off with a reception desk and a receptionist (natch). Add a GP's office and a general diagnosis room and hire two doctors, one for each. Create a pharmacy and hire a nurse to staff this. Hire a handyman to keep any litter in check and finally (although this is fairly optional) build a



Make sure you have plenty of seating. Patients don't like to stand

psychiatric room and hire a doctor with the appropriate qualifications.

# Level 2

Slightly harder, but again unlikely to cause too many problems. Build a Research Room and add a doctor making sure that he has a research qualification. The more doctors you add to this room the faster research will progress. However, it is worth noting that research only occurs when a doctor uses a machine or a filing cabinet, so make sure you keep staff occupied!



Plants increase moral, But Death still stalks my hospital

# Level 3

Harder still and now you have the added complication of trying to deal with emergencies. Keep an eye out for the emergency icon and click on it as soon as it appears. If you are sure you can handle the emergency that comes up, accept it but refuse any you might have doubts about. You won't get anywhere by trying to bite off more than you can chew! Emergencies are worth a lot if dealt with successfully. An average room can probably handle six people but make sure it is positioned as near to the helicopter landing pad as possible. If the room isn't capable of handling the emergency, build another. As the hospital gets busier it is probably also worth building a second pharmacy as this is where most patients are cured.

# Level 4

Nothing new really happens on this level but your skills will be stretched to the maximum. New cures will need to be researched so you'll need to plan the hospital really carefully to include the extra rooms required. On this level you can also have some fun shooting rats with the mouse cursor. Shoot enough and you can earn loads of money and apparently get onto the, ahem, secret rat levels... This level is also a great opportunity to pick up some awards.

# Level 5

You start off with three consultant doctors - each of whom has a different skill. Use these consultants to train any doctors you hire. Failure to do so will mean that you fail to diagnose patients properly and then everything will start to go to pot. To train juniors build a Training room and put a consultant in it. Then add juniors or doctors to the room in order to train them. The more people in a training room the less effective the training will be though, so keep students down to around two per room. Eventually juniors will become doctors and learn the consultant's skills. However, once they are at a consultant level they will stop learning anything new. It's probably also worth pointing out that if any of the doctors in a training room leave to go to the Staff Room they will return automatically once rested, so don't waste valuable time dragging them back yourself.



Research is vital to success. Add more doctors to speed things along

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**MiniDisc mystery** 



I HAVE been puzzled as to why Sony's MiniDisc has not been adopted for the purposes of data storage. One would logically pre-

sume that this would be a most suitable medium due to its inherent capability of re-recordability. I notice that current recordable CD-Roms allow up to 650Mb of storage, equating to 74 minutes of audio. MiniDisc can allow up to 74 minutes of audio and, based on this premise, one would logically equate that to 650Mb of data storage.

I have heard it said that Sony, having ownership to the commercial rights of MiniDisc, is reluctant to disclose the nature of the technology. If this is indeed the case, I find it a narrow-minded approach. The move to introduce the MiniDisc onto the music industry as a superior format to compact disc failed since the public simply refused to accept "yet another format".

Digital Audio Tape (DAT) failed for similar reasons. However, DAT is being used for data storage. It would seem that if the music market is not willing to bear this alternative format then why not redirect this technology into the growing market of data storage?

ful medium for data storage. It's rerecordable, robust and can fit inconspicuously into a shirt pocket - try doing that with a CD-Rom! - Mr. Fai Lee, London

I think MiniDisc would be a wonder-

PCH Although in theory Sony's MiniDisc sounds like it would make a wonderful storage medium, ideal for storing computer data, there are problems. The main one being that at the moment each 2.5in disc can only store about 140Mb, which means that it doesn't come anywhere near competing with the CD-Rom in terms of size of storage.

Sony has already developed a portable magneto-optical drive that uses the MiniDisc, but it's very expensive - around £750 in fact - and very slow, offering single speed CD-Rom transfer rates of only

However, the future of the MiniDisc as a data storage medium might be brighter than I suggest. This spring Sony plans to unveil its 4X density MiniDisc standard which can hold 650Mb (comparable with CD-Rom) and has a Data Transfer Rate of 580kbs. So, as they say, watch this space...

Of much more immediate interest is DVD which is set to make a big impact on the PC market by about Christmas time. DVD-Rom is capable of storing 4.7Gb per side (9.4Gb in total - 7.5 times that of CDs) and with an average transfer speed of 4.69 megabits per second. The DVD-Ram standard on the other hand will support both single sided discs capable of storing up to 2.6Gb data and double-sided discs with a 5.2Gb capacity and allow users to record and re-record onto the discs. - WW

# Bank on it

I FEEL compelled to write to you about an article in issue April 1997 about financial packages and HOBS. I have used HOBS for about six years now and have within the last six months been supplied with a windows front-end for it from The Bank of Scotland. This does have the

# Universal appeal

AS a relative newcomer to the world of PCs, I was looking for a magazine that had a bit of everything, didn't treat me like a moron and appealed to me as a working mother of two children.

I use my computer for business and 'edutainment' that really a word?). I am actually a reluc-

tantly converted Mac user and I used to subscribe

to The Mac magazine - an excellent publication pitched just right for me. Thankfully I have found your magazine after wading through many which seem to be glorified PC catalogues. PC Home is just what I'm looking for and your Web site's good too. Thanks guys, - Sheila Agnew, London

**PCH** We're glad you like the magazine Sheila, thank-you for your kind comments and welcome to the wonderful world of the PC! ww

ability to capture your bank account entries for a specified period and store data in either Quicken or MS Money formats.

I use Quicken 4.0 and this happily reads these files and I have no more worries about VAT and the accuracy of my return. Either the Bank of Scotland did not advise you of this feature or you didn't do your research very well. - Martin Connor via the Internet

**PCH** The bank specific area that you mention was intended to be a quick aside to the rest of the feature, which was of course a review of home accounting packages. Since Microsoft and Barclays have been pushing their alliance, it was considered of interest to find out what the other banks were doing. The information was gleaned from the Web sites of the banks and building societies mentioned, as there wasn't enough room to go into future plans or enormous depth as I'm sure you'd agree this could take up an entire feature in its own right.

If there was a discrepancy in the information printed and the actual services any of the institutions provide, then perhaps they should consider updating or clarifying their Web presence so that potential customers can see exactly what services they provide. Certainly, the HOBS home page mentions nothing of its compatibility with any commercially available accounting packages. - AS

# **High praise**

AS a regular PC Home reader, I find your journal well balanced and informative. Keep up the good work! Anyway, the reason for my letter is that I had a problem with other day with running a copy of MicroProse's Railroad Tycoon. The Help Line was slow to respond, the fellow who finally answered did not know the answer and even told me to go back to the shop where I had bought the game!

I rang back asking to speak to the Marketing Director - he was out. The Managing Director himself took my call. The company insisted on calling me back to save my telephone bill and as well as handling the problem I even received a follow up note of apology from the MD. I believe the Help Desk has been improved and is now running just the way it should. We are all quick to criticise when something goes wrong but if we say 'well done' when a supplier puts something right as MicroProse has in this particular case, I reckon it's a good encouragement to other suppliers to try and better their standards too.

One other point, I wonder how many of your readers have used simulation games like Railroad Tycoon in a business environment? Getting work colleagues to play such games can tell you quite a lot about their characters by the way that they play. You'll soon spot the risk takers, the plodders and the totally unscrupulous! Give it a try! - Roy Norris, Godalming, Surrey

**PCH** We get a lot of letters from readers complaining about service or the way that they have been treated by hardware or software companies, so it's nice when we get a letter that's full of praise instead. Well done MicroProse! And as for playing games against your work colleagues we can certainly vouch for the fact that you soon learn a lot about their personalities, but that's not all. Try playing an intense action game like Quake or X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter with this lot here and you soon learn some new colourful phrases you've never heard before! - WW

# Internet cash-in

THE growing popularity of the Internet has led to an increased load on the telephone network and local servers have been unable to cope with the demand from Net surfers. This popularity could, in some part, be due to the fact that many local servers use cable company telephone services which give free local calls. In some cases cable companies are withdrawing their free local calls facility to Net servers.

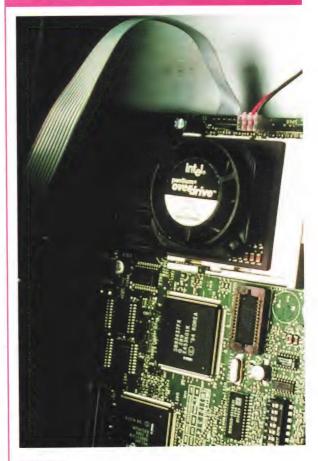
The official line here is that this is to deter the overuse of these lines and thus ease the burden on the network and to prevent local exchanges from becoming jammed, which would stop other telephone customers from using the service.

Surely though, if a free service is provided, it should be for all users, be they Net surfing or just calling a favourite uncle for a chat; and the rescinding of this service for Net users is discriminatory. It would appear the telephone companies are waking up to the fact that the Internet can be an excellent source of income for them and are taking steps to cash in on this growth area.

This is a shame because monthly subscriptions are beginning to fall in the face of competition, but overall costs will not fall because of the imposition of call charges to many users. - Chris Mawbey, Derby

**PCH** As you are aware, accessing the Net these days is causing problems with telephone exchanges and overall performance of the Net itself. You are quite right in your observation that free local calls should be free no matter who you call. The "official line" that withdrawing free local calls to local ISP numbers is to ease the burden on local exchanges and the performance of the Net itself does sound mighty weak when you consider how much the telephone companies can make on such calls.

Still, the problem of overuse of tele-



# MMX-press

I READ your article on MMX technology. Now tell me, to obtain MMX do we have to purchase a whole new motherboard or is this a chip that replaces the Intel Pentium chip most of us poor people out here now own?

Talk about a breakthrough, now that would be worth the money. Sad but true, tis not a perfect world, so it is probably a case where we have to purchase the whole board. Thanks and your answer will be DEEPLY appreciated. - Linda S. Meadows via the Internet

**PCH** An MMX OverDrive chip, you'll be pleased to hear, will indeed fit into a standard Pentium slot – it just replaces your current processor. So if you have a P75, P90 or P100 you can turn your machine into a super-dooper P125, P150 or P166 (respectively) MMX beastie for just the cost of the chip. Praise be to Intel! - WW

phone lines is a real one and does indeed need to be addressed. Surely though, telephone companies should tackle these problems by adding more capacity to their service rather than penalising subscribers.

In the end, it's the subscribers who keep the companies in profit and upsetting them by introducing charges where they are not welcome is an unwise move in such a highly competitive market. So, if you are unhappy at your telephone companies pricing strategy, let them know and start looking for better deals with other companies. Maybe that will prompt them into tackling the problem in a different way. - DE

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# **Bug alert**



OASYS P133, Acer 10-speed CD-Rom, 16Mb ram, 1.2Gb hard drive, Milom Multimedia PnP MPU-401

sound, running Windows 95. Used for work, games, graphics.



In Frontier and Frontier: First Encounters I cannot get sound to play. Both games have to be entered by

restarting in Dos.

Jo Phillips – Swansea



Well I'm no clearer as to what sound card you are using since your spidery scribble looks like a Milom

sound card, which is new to me. The MPU-401 is a music standard, but that is provided by lots of cards. I can only assume that your card is some SoundBlaster clone because you use it for games and aren't complaining that there's no sound from everything.

Now about Frontier, how can I say this. The first game had the odd bug, and was very particular about what sound card it uses. The second was a complete fiasco, resulting in Gametek having to recall the product from the shelves in order to put patch disks in, which fixed some of the problems, but not all of them. The was that genuine worst bug SoundBlaster cards didn't work with the game! That got fixed with the patch, but then you may not have the patched version. Even if you do, what with yours being some kind of clone, it is very likely not to be compatible with this dire bug ridden effort.

Of course it could be something simple - so when you install or run setup again, check that the IRQ and DMA values for the card are what you know them to be, rather than have an autodetect program get them wrong.

If that doesn't work then either buy a real SoundBlaster 16/AWE 32 card, which is a recommended option, or flog both games and put the proceeds towards buying Privateer 2: The Darkening, which is exactly the same kind of game, but rather excellent instead of dated and tawdry.

# Song of woe



HOME built 486DX4 133MHz, 16Mb ram, 850Mb hard drive, Opti SoundBlaster compatible, 8-speed CD-Rom,

running Windows 95, Microsoft Office Pro, general home computing and games.



Whenever I try to play a \*.MID, \*.RMI and very occasionally \*.WAV files I get an error message, "MMSYS-

TEM281 This file could not be played. Check the filename or install a driver that supports this type of file." Similar messages referring to MMSYSTEM296 and MMSYSTEM337 also rear their heads from time to time.

Mathew Ralston - Wallesy

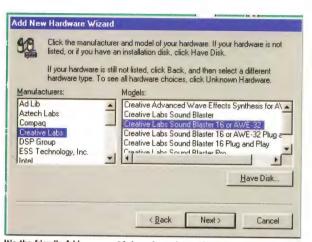


Well Mathew, the MMSYS-TEM.DLL at the heart of this problem is a collection of system APIs for playing

multimedia and, in your case, sound files. The problem is that the driver that your self styled SoundBlaster compatible uses is either not so very compatible after all, or it has corrupted. Or it does work and your Windows file has corrupted.

So my answer to you is to remove the sound card from your system by going to Control Panel...System...Device Manager selecting it and clicking on Remove. Then in the System folder double click on Add new hardware and select that it is a sound card then click on the Have disk gadget when appropriate. This will re-install the drivers for it.

If that doesn't work or clear the problem up then re-install Windows 95 itself.



It's the friendly Add New Hardware Wizard. Tell it that you have a sound card

If that doesn't work either then I would say that your SB clone is more like an SB clown. Ditch it and buy an SB16 since they aren't expensive.

# Old dog



486DX 33MHz, 8Mb ram, Kelvin 64 1Mb video card. Used for home use and Windows 95.



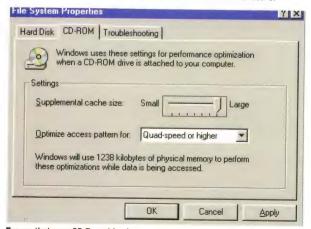
Is there any way of speeding up Windows 95 with software as I find it very slow? Mathew Bennion - Stafford



I assume the real question here is more like is there any way of speeding it up without spending anything.

Let's face it, the real problem is that your computer is in fact an old dog trying to play with the young hounds. The processor is too slow and you don't have enough ram.

With that combination you'll find that the screen update is sluggish and, worse still, whenever you do anything the system goes on holiday as it reads and writes from the hard drive. I have a 486 66MHz running Win95 and that is too slow, even with a SCSI hard drive.



Ensure that your CD-Rom drive is operating at maximum efficiency with the supplemental cache

Yes, there are ways of speeding the machine up - making sure that Windows 95 manages your virtual memory for you and that you have a fast hard drive, not some old piece of tat that was bought second hand.

If you run the screen in 640X480 in 256 colours you should find that that is the fastest resolution to use because the window requires the least memory to display. You can change the CD-Rom setting so that it uses the maximum supplemental cache size - but then this requires around 1Mb of memory and you don't have a lot of it anyway.

Also, last month's edition of PC Home featured 20 tips for making your PC run faster. However, this is simply a finger in the dyke exercise. You need new hardware more than anything. Your video card is a decent one so a low cost option would be - and it would work in your system - to add a Pentium 83MHz OverDrive processor. And buy some more ram too - the more you have the less time Win95 will spend churning the hard drive around. Another 8Mb will cost you all of £25.

# Schizophrenic PC



VOBIS Contessa Pentium 166MHz, 16Mb ram, 8-speed CD-Rom, 1.5Gb hard drive and built in modem. Used for

home multimedia.



I recently purchased the above computer. It came from the computer store preconfigured as it had been a

display model and I was offered it at a reduced price because its original 15" monitor had been mislaid. I was offered a 14" Tatung Intelliscan in its place at the price asked. I couldn't refuse as it was my dream machine – I have suffered for the last three years with a 486SX 25MHz with 8Mb ram and a twin-speed CD-Rom drive.

When setting it up I went to the control panel and there I found an applet that said infrared. Being adventurous I double clicked on it and got the following message: "Error 0. Your infrared software is not installed properly. Make sure your communication ports are properly configured and then re-install your Infrared software." At this point I chickened out as I don't have a clue as to what an Infrared device is or what it does. Can you enlighten me?

I also came across two seemingly contradicting MSINFO.TXT which I have printed out for your perusal. Am I being thick or is it telling me that I have two versions of Windows (versions 4 and 3.95) and also two different processors - a Pentium and a 80486. Also have I really got two separate drives? I hope you can set me straight.

W. Gibson - Bristol



Firstly congratulations on entering the Pentium age Mr Gibson - how did you make do with a 486SX

25MHz for so long?

Anyway, as you mentioned, this is a shop model, and it's pretty obvious that they've been using it to test hardware and put different pieces of equipment into it. The hard drive could also have come from another machine entirely.

The Infrared device that the system can't find is in all probability an infrared mouse - which some people love but personally I would answer: Well play Quake with it then. By the time the machine has got to you the mouse and its hardware have long gone, leaving behind only the device driver. Remove it the next time you see it

I would also recommend that you get the lid off this machine as soon as possible to check what is inside and that there aren't spare parts still in there.

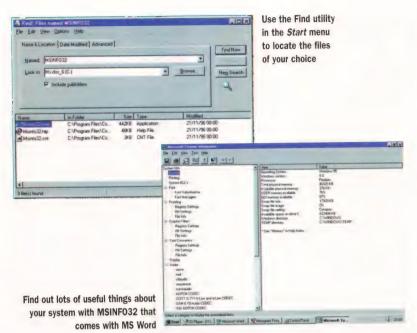
Now then, MSINFO32.EXE is a handy little program that is installed along with Microsoft Office. It's buried quite deeply in the Program Files folder so if anyone does have Office and wants to use it then I advise going to the Start menu and using the find file option.

This is a system interrogation program which returns what the system is and a basic guide to what it is using. You can print it out or save the report to disk, which is what has happened here.

Either this program was run when your PC was a lowly 486 and the store has upgraded it, or the hard drive was in another computer altogether. Either way you certainly don't have a 486 chip in there and fortunately they haven't simply dropped an OverDrive chip into a 486 motherboard either because the chip is too modern and

At some time the hard drive you have now was also living alongside another, larger hard drive. Unless you are very lucky and they have left it in - it's a 1.18Gb drive! - you undoubtedly only have one hard drive. However, it's worth checking both by logging onto D: and seeing whether it is anything else other than a CD-Drive, and also by getting the lid off to see if it is still in there but has just been disconnected.

Probably not - it looks like the machine has had a rudimentary tidy up. As for the versions of Windows that were reported, we're split on this one. All versions of Windows 95 and any software designed for it carry the 4.xx identifier. Microsoft has insisted that software written for it carries a 4.xx version number to identify it to the system as a proper



piece of 95 code.

As you know, the older version of Windows only got up to 3.11, so it's entirely unlikely that this is what MSINFO has found, especially as it also reports a Dos version of 7, which came with Windows 95. I'm of the opinion that this report is of one of the Beta test versions of Windows 95, but as I said, we're split on this one.

Either way it's nothing to worry about. Simply remove that unwanted driver and enjoy your new(ish) high speed Pentium PC.

# Missing out



P120, 8Mb ram, 1.2Gb hard drive, SoundBlaster (Adr:220, DMA:3, IRQ:5), 1Mb video ram. Used for education,

games, typing.



I usually play games in Dos to speed them up but the problem is that when I go to the command prompt by

getting the Windows startup menu (pressing F8), I can't seem to get my CD-Rom drive and sound card loaded.

So whenever I try to load a game from CD-Rom it doesn't seem to recognise the D: drive or the sound card. I have enclosed copies of my AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files, I hope you can help.

Fahad Mahmood - Peterborough



Well it's not a hard one. Your sound card probably isn't getting anywhere because you are using the

wrong DMA channel. According to your files you should enter a value of 1 when setting up any games, not 3. The reason

the CD-drive isn't working in Dos is because the Windows 95 setup has disabled it in favour of its own built in driver. To get it working simply locate the line in your AUTOEXEC.BAT that has MSCDEX in it and remove the rem - By Windows Setup - that's been placed in front of it. Save the file and reboot and it work properly in Dos.

I would also advise you invest in some more memory. 8Mb just isn't enough any more. When you have 16Mb you'll be able to play many Dos games from within Windows 95.

# Rodent problem



GATEWAY P120, 16Mb ram, 2.3Gb, 10-speed CD-Rom. Used for Windows 95 and the Internet, and anything I can

think of.



The mouse refuses to work in a Dos game, despite having loaded the mouse driver via C:\MSINPUT in AU-

TOEXEC.BAT. If run from Windows shortcut there is a display problem. If run from Dos display is okay but the sound and mouse do not work.

John French - Bristol



This is another one of those Mystic Meg cases isn't it? Look, if you have a problem that involves our old friends

AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS then doesn't it make sense to actually include a listing of the things so I have some kind of chance to see what's going wrong and where?

Now it's inconceivable that you have a mouse driver that is so old that applications don't work with it. If you had a 486 🖛

# READERS'

YOU too can win some rather handy prizes, which are subject to change at the whim of the PC Home overlords. All you have to do is think of a useful way of using your PC and its ever so reliable operating system, then scribble it down on the bottom of First Aid problem sheet and tick which prize you want. Send it off to IDG towers at the address given and some weeks later we'll print it in the magazine. That's assuming it's any good of course. The best hint each month will win the prize.

# The vanishing

Can't detect a modem that has stopped working and suddenly vanished from the system? Go into System...Device Manager and remove the modem from com ports 3 and 4. Shut down and switch off, wait 10 seconds and restart. Add new hardware using the Win 95 program and if it doesn't work, switch off again. Take the modem card out and switch on, then off again to clear any references to it. Try it in a different slot, restart and add new hardware agian. This could well solve your problems.

Anthony Robson - Oakham

# **Cut and paste**

I HAD a situation recently where I wanted to use artwork from a package which only saves files as .GED, for desktop or wallpaper. I ran the application, created my artwork, then used the capture element of Paint Shop Pro (free on lots of cover disks) and saved the captured image as a .BMP file. Then cut and cropped it with MS Paint and saved it at the right size to be used as wallpaper. John French - Bristol

# Safe and sorry

TIRED of the standard Windows screen savers, but still need password security? The third party screen savers offered by many companies offer password protection too, however you can't trust them. Why? Because when you press Ctrl-Alt-Del it offers an opportunity to end the screen saver task, thus exposing your system to all and sundry.

Tim Polley - Brighton

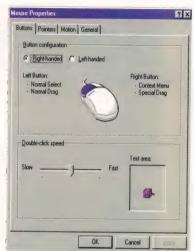
# Safe and secure

IF YOU are worried about making recent backups of your AU-TOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files (I'm sure it's preying on everyone's minds - Duncan) then make a directory called C:\BACKUP and put these commands at the end of the AU-TOEXEC file:

COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT C:\BACKUP COPY C:\CONFIG.SYS C:\BACKUP

To avoid accidentally deleting the C:\BACKUP folder go to the Windows Explorer and right click on the folder. Now select Properties and make sure that the Hidden box is checked. Peter Beverley – Rugeley

The mouse driver in Windows is a wonderfully friendly and user configurable thing – but not in Dos



then maybe, but not in the case of a P133. So, unless the mouse driver file has gone gaga, and the fact that your mouse works in Windows 95 proves it works, it only leaves the likelihood that it isn't entered correctly in your AUTOEXEC file. Simply having a folder in there isn't enough, so please ensure that it does read LH C:\MSINPUT\MOUSE.COM.

Actually another possibility considering the newness of your computer is that it hasn't been supplied with a Dos mouse driver, in which case you need to ask your local PC store to give you one on a disk.

Now, about the sound not working either. Look at your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and see if it contains the following items:

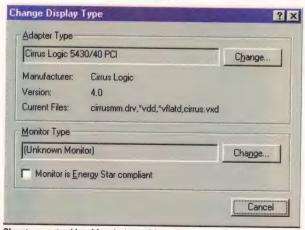
SET SOUND=C:\SB16 SET BLASTER=A220 15 D1 H5 P330 T6

If it doesn't then type them in. As yours is a SoundBlaster 16 it undoubtedly uses the same settings.

# Oi, shut down



PENTIUM 133, 32Mb ram, 4-speed CD-Rom, 2.5Gb hard drive, 4Mb Mystique video card, 17" monitor and



Change your graphics driver to try and force more reliability out of Windows 95

SoundBlaster 16. Used for DTP, games and the Internet.



The computer runs fine until I try to shut it down or Restart in Dos. The screen goes blank and says

Windows Protection. You need to restart your computer. It then allows me to turn it off. Please help.

Roy Broean - Milton Keynes



There are a couple of things that might be causing this. In fact it could have been caused by almost anything.

However, I have seen exactly this situation occur, and given that you have a fancy graphics card I'm tempted to think that this might be the cause. In the case I'd seen before it was caused by a new graphics driver that was necessary to run DirectX 3 compatible games. The trouble was that it didn't like shutting down or restarting in Dos – both actions caused it to hang up.

My answer to you is therefore to try and find an updated graphics driver for your card - as you are on the Internet it shouldn't prove too difficult to find out if there is a newer version than the one your system uses.

However, if you have installed DirectX2 or 3 on your system and the problem started afterwards, consider reinstalling your original graphics drivers. Or, on the flip side, try installing DirectX3 which comes with many games such as Red Alert.

# **Re-entry difficulties**



MITAC 486DX4 100MHz, 28Mb ram, 1.2Gb hard drive, 8-speed CD-Rom, Primax

colour hand scanner. Running Windows 95 and used for home use and school planning.



I have had to replace both my hard drive and CD-Rom drive. My new CD-Rom doesn't always recognise

CDs when first entered. Sometimes I have to eject and re-enter up to four times before the CD is recognised, audio and computer programs alike.

Also, when playing an audio CD and using any program, everything seems to freeze during the time lapse between one track and another, although this is only intermittent. The engineer who replaced the faulty components says this can happen and is a regular occurrence. I must be able to do something to rectify the problem. In case this was a memory problem I have installed extra ram from 16Mb to 28Mb, but it still continues.

Harry Connell - Hartlepool



Well unless you aren't waiting long enough for the CD to be recognised – it doesn't happen instantly you know,

or you don't keep the underside of the CDs clean enough then something is sadly wrong. I'd check your connections to the drive and, if it still continues, replace the cable. Unless you have a Pioneer CD-drive, in which case I'd advise you to change it for some other brand because certain Pioneer models are not fully compatible with Windows 95.

Another thing to try is to go to the Control Panel and select System Properties, then Device Manager and then double click on the CD-Rom icon. In the window that pops up have a look at the Settings and make sure the box for Auto insert notification is check on.

On the second question it is entirely likely that your machine can pause while it switches tracks. The answer to that is don't play music CDs, or simply play them when you are word processing and not playing games.

# Left to its own devices



AMD K5 P133, 40Mb ram, 800Mb hard drive, 4-speed CD-Rom drive, 16-bit sound card, 1Mb video card, 28.8k

modem, Windows 95. Used for home, games, word processing and programming.



My many attempts to get my CD-Rom drive to work in Dos (that is when I shut down into Ms-Dos) have

been to no avail. Included are my CON-FIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files which are a bit messy. Please could you help me sort it out.

Max Frimond - Godalming



How many letters are we getting on this subject? Lots and lots dear readers. You weren't kidding Max when

you said these files were a bit messy, not least because it looks like your CD-Drive has been installed twice and removed twice, and you have no less than three totally different CD device drivers.

The problem is in determining which one actually relates to the CD drive in your machine, and the only person who can find this out is you. If your CD-drive is working in Windows 95 then you should be in luck. Go to Start...Settings..Control Panel and double click on System. Now select Device Manager, and click on CD-ROM. The tree should unfurl another branch containing the make and model of the CD

drive. If it doesn't then you'll need to get physical.

Take the lid off and look at the top of the CD unit. Is it a Samsung? Or is it an MTM Atapi, or what I can guess at might be a Toshiba (or something beginning with T). If you now know things can be fixed quite quickly. If you don't then you'll have to try what I'm going to suggest in order, for each device driver until it works.

Let's assume that your CD-Drive is a Toshiba, for no other reason than it's the first active CD device driver. Okay, look down your CONFIG.SYS until you get to the line:

DEVICE=C:\DEV\TSY\TSYCDROM.SYS /D:TSYCD1 /P:PS

Now this driver actually appears earlier in the listing, but it's been REMed out. The worrying thing is that it says that the driver is in the directory C:\DEV, not C:\DEV\TSY as in this case. However, as that one is REMed out and this one isn't let's go with it.

Now look down the rest of the CON-FIG.SYS and where you find:

DEVICE=C:\DEV\MTM\MTMCDAI.SYS /D:MTMIDE001

And

DEVICE=C:\DEV\SAMSUNG\SSCDROM.SYS /D:SSCD000

Put a REM and a space in front of both of them. Now save your CONFIG.SYS. Right, now load your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. Look down to the fifth line where it

Rem - By Windows Setup -C:\WINDOWS\COMMAND\MSCDEX.EXE /D:TSYCD1 /E

Now delete all the words and dashes so that the first thing on the line is C:\. Save the file and restart your PC. Press F8 when Windows is about to start and select the option to start in MS-Dos. You'll see your startup files being processed and hopefully the CD-Drive being installed. Try logging onto D: and see if it's there. If it isn't then you need to go back to your CONFIG.SYS, REM out the TSY driver and unREM the MTM driver. Save it again.

It may well be that you do know what the CD-drive is by this point and that it's one of these other drivers. That being the case, or if the first method didn't work, now need to alter the we AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

Find the line where you took off all the words and dashes - the MSCDEX driver in fact. Okay, look along the line and remove this part: /D:TSYCD1 and instead put in /D:MTMIDE01. Save and reboot and see if that works. If it doesn't then we are down to the last driver. Back to CON-FIG.SYS, REM out the first two and unREM the SAMSUNG driver. Save it and

load AUTOEXEC. Now delete the /D:MT-MIDE01 that you put in and instead insert /D:SSCD000. Save and reboot. One of these three will work. If you know what the CD-Drive is in the first place then simply follow the part of my instructions that refers to it. I think I'll lie down now.

### Earthbound



PENTIUM 60MHz, 8Mb ram, 4-speed CD-Rom, V7 Mirage graphics card. SoundBlaster 16 sound card,

running Windows 95. Used for schoolwork and playing games.



I have recently bought Privateer 2: The Darkening at a boot fair and when I came to install it refused to.

Instead I got an error about the game needing a VESA compliant Bios to play. I know that the game can only be played or installed from Dos and have tried doing that. What is wrong? Is the game faulty, because obviously I can't take it back, or do I need a whole new motherboard. Please help because I have heard a lot about the game and am really looking forward to playing it.

Andy Potter - Croydon



Well there's good news and there's bad news. Which do you want first? Okay, the bad news first, the game

isn't faulty so you haven't wasted your cash, and neither do you need a new motherboard (yet), but (and this is the bad news part) you do need a new graphics card. Yes, the error message was referring to the inability of the Spea V7 Mirage to work with games that use the VESA standard in Dos.

Even the latest Mirage drivers do not correct the problem so you need to pull out the card, go to your local shop and buy a new card. Any new one will do, although, if you want my advice - don't touch Diamond Stealth cards with a barge pole. If you want a reliable and cheap option get a Cirrus Logic card - a 1Mb video card will only set you back £30-£40 from a decent shop.

## Multiplicity



GATEWAY 2000 4DX4-100P, 16Mb ram, Tseng Labs video 3.1. card, Windows SoundBlaster card. Used for

Windows 3.1, Norton 6, Commander and games.



Having loaded the CD that came with the April issue of PC Home, I wanted to see the new MDK game. It

# READERS' BAG 'O HIN

### Formatting fun

THIS is a tip for use with Microsoft Word and allows you to insert your name automatically into letters, rather than having to type it out every time you write to someone. Try the following.

Go to the Tools menu and select Templates and Add Inns.

Press the Organiser button. Select Auto Text. Highlight any line you don't think you will need in the top left column.

Press Rename and enter new text - for example Your Name, and press enter. This text is automatically copied to the right hand column. Click on Close.

Select View...Toolbars...Customise...Commands...Auto Text and look for Your Name. Drag it to the toolbar. To use it in your documents all you have to do is position the cursor in the document where you want it and click on Your Name on the toolbar and it will automatically be copied in.

Harry Connell – Hartlepool

### Disk dilemma

TO speed up applications that spend a lot of time looking for data - most games these days occupy more than 10Mb - you need Smart Drive. This is software that comes Dos and Windows and it works by using some of your ram as temporary storage for data from your hard disk. Every time that a record is read from the disk Smart Drive saves adjacent records in ram, because the chances are that these will be the next things needed. Since getting data from ram is faster than from hard drive Smart Drive helps reduces those irritating pauses. To install it add the following line to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file:

C:\DOS\SMARTDRV 2048 1024

The two numbers are the amounts of ram it uses in Dos and Windows respectively.

Fahad Mahmood - Peterborough

### Long drive home

RIGHTY, I'm printing the following hint because it was better than some of the frankly pitiful efforts that came in the post this month. So get your fingers out and get tipping. And hinting. However, I think this is more effort than it's worth, but Windows 95 is horses for courses so you may find it's just what you wanted. – DE.

When the desktop becomes hidden by application windows you can get back to the desktop without minimising everything. Double click My Computer and display the Toolbar by clicking on the View menu option in the drop down list. Click on the Desktop icon, size and arrange the new desktop folder window.

Right clicking on a blank area of the window will give you the arrange options. Then minimise it. When you shut down Windows, don't close the desktop folder. The next time you start Windows 95 the desktop will still be on your Taskbar, enabling you to get at everything on your PC in one go, without having to minimise any windows you might have open.

Lee Baines - Wrexham





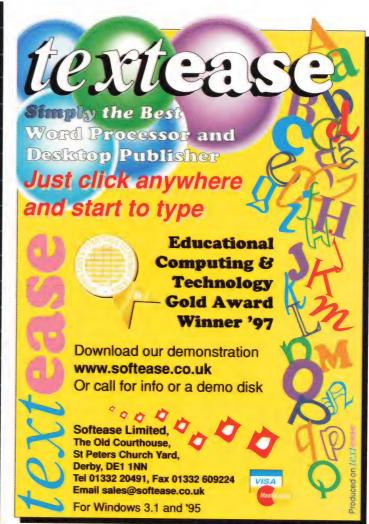
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looked great in the review of the mag, and I even saw it on TV and it looked stunning. So I loaded it up but the monitor went black with the message "Your computer has a 486 or unknown processor. I am sorry but for performance reasons I cannot allow you to play."

I tried extra memory, disk boot, no EMS etc, to no avail, and I have only just upgraded my computer to 16Mb last week.

Can you please explain why I can't run MDK – I have enclosed copies of my AUTOEXEC and CONFIG files.

Also can you tell me if I can upgrade my computer from Windows 3.1 with the new Windows 97, without Windows 95?

Richard Rycraft - Maidstone



I hate to ask this, but what kind of PC did you think you had? The words 4DX4-100P are a bit of a giveaway that it's a 486DX4 100MHz

chip, and as you pointed out, MDK requires a Pentium and won't run on a 486. While this chip was just about acceptable last year, I'm afraid that this year it's too slow to run 3-D games at any acceptable level.

You can upgrade the chip to a Pentium OverDrive 83MHz right now at a reasonable cost and that will let you play MDK, but then the problem is that the rest of your system is going to be too slow, particularly the graphics card, for any 3-D games that are Windows 95 natives.

Unless your motherboard has PCI slots on it, it will be have ISA and VESA slots. That's good enough, with a P83 OverDrive, for a game of Quake, but you are better off replacing the motherboard and buying a P120 chip - which are now quite cheap. Obviously you'll need a new graphics card too.

The answer to the second question is no I'm afraid. Windows 97 is actually Windows 95b, and is your regular 95 with a few bug fixes and some extras - most of which are available free to download from the Microsoft Web site anyway. It is being supplied on new PCs but there is not an upgrade available at all and you can't buy it in the shops either. It's surprising that Microsoft have passed up the chance to make yet more money but that's probably because there is a new version of Windows on the way and it won't want to muddy the waters with this minor upgrade.

# CyberMedia®

# Write in and win

EACH month you can win a software package courtesy of CyberMedia

To stand a chance of winning, just send us a tip which you think can be of help to other readers. It can be software or hardwarerelated, but no game hints please - send those to the Home & Dry section.

The reader who, in our opinion, has sent in the best tip, will win this superb First Aid 97 trouble shooting package from CyberMedia:



Most users have experienced an inexplicable crash at the most inconvenient moment. Using First Aid 97 will ensure that your PC intercepts crashes and saves your work for you. CyberMedia First Aid 97 offers technical support in a box for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. The application interface uses an easy step-by-step process enabling users to keep their PCs problem free. First Aid 97 is available at all major retail stores for £34.95.

Fill in the form on the right and send it to the address shown. The best tip will win a copy of CyberMedia's First Aid '97

# PC Home, I need help

Name:
Address:
Postcode
Telephone
FILL IN THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM:
Your system:
Used for:
Your problem:
-
THIS SECTION IS FOR A TIP OR COMMENT:

### Cut out this form or make a photocopy and send to:

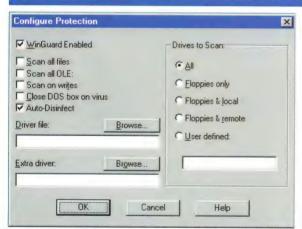
PC Home Help, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4NP. Alternatively fax it to 01625 879966. Please mark the document clearly for the attender of PC Home. Feel free to use additional paper if cessary but include this form and remember to sign every sheet. We regret that we cannot answer queries over the telephone, no

can we provide personal replies by letter or fax.



# **BUSINESS** Park

It's time for another look at what great applications and utilities are on offer to help make your life with your PC a safer and more productive one



HomeGuard protects your PC against viruses from many sources such as e-mail and the Internet

### **HomeGuard**

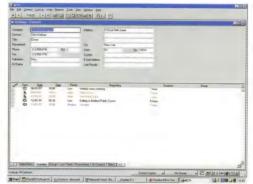
WE are all at risk from viruses. They can destroy files and even the complete contents of a hard drive. Until recently, the only real threat to your machine came from infected removable media such as floppy disks and CD-Roms. There are loads of anti-virus applications available to combat this threat though; allowing you to examine and essentially disinfect the offending disks.

However, in these days of e-mail, Internet connectivity, application macros and Web surfing, a new route for viruses to spread has materialised. You may not realise this but it is now possible to get a virus from an e-mail or even by simply accessing a Web site that contains active content.

Dr Solomon's HomeGuard works by constantly monitoring your PC in the background and, thanks to its advanced detection algorithms, can prevent damage to your files and disks on the fly. If viruses are a concern for you, and they

should be, then HomeGuard is an easy and automatic method of protecting your PC. - DE





ACT! 3 is an ideal tool with powerful features for keeping track of important contacts and clients

ACT! 3 from Symantec is a powerful tool that can help you create and maintain a contact database. Symantec claims that ACT! is the most widely used contact manager software in the world with more than a million users world-wide. These numbers may be true considering that ACT! is also available for PDA's such as Apple Newton and Psion 3a Organisers.

Screen layout is simple and logical with basic contact information fields, such as name, address and telephone

number, in the upper frame on the screen and further information in the lower frame

The lower frame itself has various functions and data displays that are accessed via tabs. Some of the options on offer here include a scrollable history list of actions, notes and attachments.

You can also group together collections of contacts and the Group tab shows which group a contact relates to.

The User Fields tab lets you set up your own custom data

fields. Adding and modifying these fields is done on the main screen. You do only get one page of user-defined fields though. It would have been nice to have multiple user-defined tabs too.

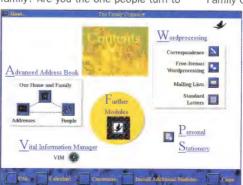
Although fields other than those within the User Fields page are pretty much set, there is a good degree of choice on the user's part as to how these set fields are laid out.

Many pages allow you to add or remove various columns so you can pretty much alter your database to how you want it to look

If you're looking for a way to maintain

## **The Family Organiser**

ARE you the organised one in the family? Are you the one people turn to



A good idea but let down by a sluggish and awkward interface

to sort everything out? Well, The Family Organiser claims to be just the tool for you.

> It consists of a number of modules such as address book, vital information manager, something called a social connections module and a simple wordprocessor. You also get a free T-shirt.

The social connection module is rather strange. It claims to be useful for such situations as keeping track of who has met whom, when they met and how they got

a contact database ACT! 3 certainly delivers the goods. Group license is a little pricey though and, compared to Goldmine 3.2 (probably its closest rival), it does lack numerous features. - DE

Supplier Symantec Telephone \_\_\_01628 592222 £222 (single-user license) \*\*\*\*\*

### QuickMail Pro

ACCORDING to CE Software, its OuickMail e-mail client boasts a user base of over two million. However, its lack of support for Internet protocols such as TCP/IP and POP3 (Post Office Protocol 3) was starting to make it somewhat less appealing to the ever-increasing Internet community.

Most major Internet service providers are beginning to provide POP3 e-mail facilities as standard and CE Software has recognised this. As a result QuickMail Pro allows connection through POP3 servers. It still works pretty much like its predecessor but is now able to handle background mail retrieval. Client-side filtering is also available but offers a somewhat limited choice of conditional rules.

Address books are pretty much the same too. MessagePeek allows you to quickly preview the first few lines of a



QuickMail Pro is a competent e-mail client but doesn't offer significant advantages over Windows 95's Exchange client

on, which is apparently essential for getting the right mix at parties.

Unfortunately, the whole program is marred by a poor interface design. It's also written using FileMaker Pro and is extremely slow.

Screen redraw is terribly sluggish when it comes to such things as simple interface buttons and forms. Even quitting the program takes around 10 seconds and this is on a P150 with 57Mb! - DE

Supplier Mosaic Computers Telephone \_\_\_01789 299010 £29.99 \*\*\*\* message by clicking on the header with the right mouse button.

If your message contains any URLs, you can highlight the address and then select Launch URL from the edit menu. However, it would have been more elegant and consistent if you could rightclick on the URL and have the Launch URL command in the resulting pop-up

QuickMail Pro also allows you to quickly check the spelling of your e-mail prior to sending the text thanks to its built-in spell-checking feature.

For those of you who regularly send binary attachments with your e-mail, the program allows you to drag and drop file icons into the message composition window where they are automatically attached to your e-mail.

If you are a Windows 3.1 user, QuickMail Pro is a competent e-mail client. For Windows 95 users however, it's difficult to see any real advantages QuickMail Pro (which is a 16-bit application) has over Windows 95's built-in Exchange e-mail client. - DE

Supplier \_\_\_\_Computers Unlimited Telephone \_\_\_0181 200 8282 £49.95 (single-user license) Price \*\*\*\*\*

### Tax '97

THE Inland Revenue's new self-assessment regime will no doubt be a minefield of potential problems for private individuals and the self-employed who are affected by the new system. There are hefty fines for late or incorrect tax returns, but the real problem will probably be that of overpayment.

It's here that Tax '97 provides aid to help those new to the system avoid the aforementioned pitfalls. However, it's no substitute for professional advice and you should always consult advisors in situations of unusual complexity.

Tax '97 can tell you how much tax you have to pay. You can input your details of your income and allowances and it will automatically compute how much you need to cough up to the tax man.

The program also contains an introduction to self-assessment providing you with tips on the documentation that you need to keep. It also has a self-assessment diary that tells you what you must do

If you are one of the millions of people affected by the self-assessment system, Tax '97 is a low-cost tool to make your life a little easier. - DE

Supplier \_\_\_\_Europress Software Telephone \_\_\_01625 859333 £29.99 \*\*\*\*\*



Norton Utilities 2 provides powerful diagnostic and repair tools that keep system problems at bay

### **Norton Utilities 2**

NORTON Utilities 2 is a powerful suite of tools that will help you keep your PC in good condition. It offers powerful disk and file repair features as well as a host of other general system repair and maintenance facilities.

Compared to the previous incarnation, which couldn't handle the new FAT32 file system found in the latest version of Windows 95. Norton Utilities 2 is a vast improvement, adding virus scanning and much improved registry editing facilities.

The new Registry Tracker can record all changes made to the system registry file, acting either in the background or on demand.

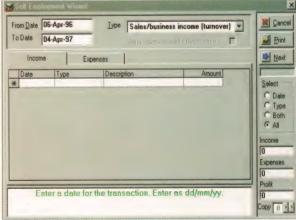
As well as editing the registry, you can also edit the SYSTEM.INI and WIN.INI files using the registry editor. In conjunction with the Registry Tracker, any changes you make to the registry can be easily undone should you mess things

Another pretty smart feature available in the latest version is the Norton Companion program. This provides concise and clear technical details of disks, memory

and Windows 95 in general. Norton Utilities 2 is an essential

tool for those who are serious about keeping system problems at bay. -DE

Supplier \_\_\_\_Symantec Telephone \_\_01628 592222 £69 \*\*\*\*\* Rating



Tax '97 can help make self-assessment just that little bit easier and less confusing



# HARDWIRED

Plug into the hottest home hardware



# **JUST 17**

Expand your visual horizons with a huge selection of 17 inch monitors

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# HANDFUL OF JOY

Wiggle it you wrigglers! Sticks and pads of joy tested to the edge of destruction

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# NEW HARDWARE

The latest new hardware examined and reviewed by our experts

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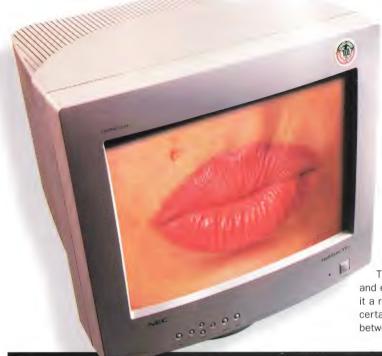
# MultiSync M700

speakers and microphone. In fact, this is a rather oddly shaped box, with a sort of large "Jimmy Hill" style chin which houses the multimedia extras and

The quality of this monitor's picture quality is reasonable though surpassed by some of the other models. It was easy to get a clear and well aligned picture though, even in particularly troublesome high resolution modes.

weren't great either. This all in one option is certainly a little less than the sum of its components, and I would advise not going for a model with built in speakers unless you're really pushed for space.

Price	0645 404020 £715.58
Price	£715.58



# MultiSync XV17+

THIS is the office equivalent of the M700, which basically means you lose the multimedia capability of the speakers and the microphone. The on-screen controls are identical (without the volume and mixing controls), but all the same criticisms apply really.

There is an option to select a monitor that is close to this in Windows (well, it's the same name without the plus sign) which is a bit better, but resolutions over 800X600 are still a little unsatisfactory in the picture quality department.

If anything I think this is a better monitor, simply because it

doesn't rely on the gimmicky speakers of the other model.

The picture is reasonably clear and easy enough to adjust, making it a reasonable monitor but it certainly isn't the best balance between price and performance.

Price	£616.50
Telephone	0645 404020
Supplier	NEC

# Mazellan 17PX

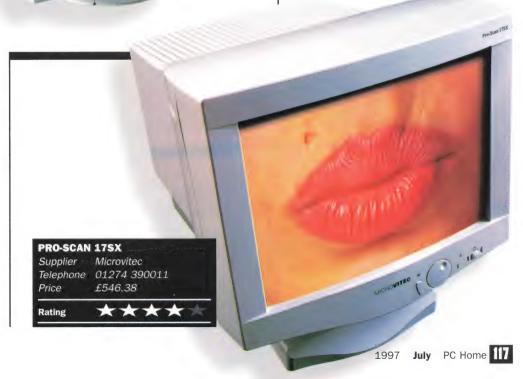
THIS is a beauty of a monitor. The picture is pixel clear at resolutions up to 1200X1024 pixels - no shadows on the screen of this monitor. Hansol is a relative newcomer to this country, but if production of nice monitors of this calibre continues then there's no reason why it shouldn't become a name to remember. As a result, a price hasn't been set for the monitor yet, making it difficult to compare. For your information, it costs \$779 in the States, so keep your eye out for models when they make it over here soon.

The controls for the on-screen menu, hidden behind a drop down panel, allow the regular adjustments, including geometry options like squeezing the middle and flaring the top and bottom (known as the pincushion) to help square up the screen in what is essentially a not quite flat screen, but there's nothing too heavyweight in here. Not that it particularly needed it, as the technical tests I ran came out pretty near perfect. If, when pricing is finally confirmed for this monitor it compares favourably with the others on test here, it could quite easily earn itself an extra mark.



# Pro-Scan 17SX

THIS is the only monitor in this roundup that uses a whopping great rotary dial on the front to control the on-screen display. It's one of the bigger resolution holders as well, letting you go up to an awesome 1600 by 1200. Watch out for eye-strain as you have to peer in to view the tiny icons! Screen regulation (where bright areas deform a little) wasn't quite perfect, but it outperformed some of the others in other areas so we can look over this a little. A fine monitor, particularly if you want that extra umph in the resolution department.



# The Nokia 447Xav. Creating a sound environment.



With its superb picture quality, the Nokia 447Xav is ideal for internet applications using graphics and animation.

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YET another multimedia monitor, though this one has speakers that leave a lot to be desired. The picture itself is clear and sharp, though there is a bit of a purity problem on the very edges of the model I looked at - darkness on the left and bright on the right. Again, this really isn't incredibly noticeable, but on close inspection it's the kind of thing that really shouldn't be there.

The control is quite nifty, featuring a one button and a wheel combo to get to all the extra on-screen display options, which

although it took me a while to sort out, what with being allergic to manuals, actually works really well. It doesn't absolve it for rubbish speakers and that impurity, but the price is reasonable.

ERGOVISIO	ON 730 TCO-S
Supplier	Taxan
Telephone	01344 484646
Price	£515.83
Rating	***

# Mitac L1770HD

200

MITAC L1770HD

Price

Rating

THIS Mitac model produced a clear picture at all resolutions, except for its highest of 1280X1024, at which a little bit of blurring started to occur. The technical tests I performed showed slight problems in a few areas, but these were only slight, and featured in the difficult tests such as slight beam spread in the corners, slight colour convergence problems and screen regulation from bright

The controls are fairly simple, again being an on-screen menu that doesn't allow anything particularly technical, but should be enough to get a relatively decent picture.



THIS monitor features a standard cathode ray tube but with a special coating that should reduce glare, reflection and static, though it uses the standard shadow mask technique to focus its electron guns.

The picture passes the technical tests, though I wasn't completely convinced of the sharpness at the maximum resolutions, the colour is certainly vibrant and clear. It's a very nice monitor and I would be proud to have one sitting on my desk. For what you get, the price is very good, making this a pretty smart option.



# Set Your Sights High

Microvitec now brings its specialist monitor experience to the desktop PC market place \$\infty\$ 18 years of producing sophisticated, high performance monitors for mission critical applications - aeronautical, medical, navigational, dealing room \$\infty\$ European integrated design and manufacturing plant \$\infty\$ ISO 9001 accredited

# Set Your | Pro-Scan 175X



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- \$\Phi\$ First monitor to market with new microfilter tube
- Sets new standards in screen performance
- Dramatically improves brightness and contrast ratios





£465

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- Ergonomic styling
- ⊕ 17" 0.24mm horizontal dot pitch microfilter tul
- Rotary controls and comprehensive OSD
- 12 pre set and 20 user definable channels
- Plug and play (DDC 1/2B)
- 3 year warranty
- **VESA DPMS**







MPR II







# **Microscan 5V**

ALTHOUGH perhaps a little less controllable than some of the other monitors, this model was very sharp and clear. The only problem I could find was that there was a slight discrepancy with the convergence of the blue gun, meaning that colour alignment was *slightly* awry. Because this is a problem that could potentially get worse over time, it's a shame that there wasn't a control on the monitor which could alter this directly.

Also, the tube was not as flat as some of the other monitors, meaning that your eventual full screen size is going to be a little smaller. It's still a nice size and the clarity was impressive at resolutions up to 1280X1024. For the price, which is at the lower end of the scale, the lack of features was more than made up for.

# Hitachi CM620ET

THIS monitor did very well in the technical tests. It performed nicely at all resolutions and has a menu system that is around the average sort of mark in terms of features, but is very clear and simple to use.

It is another good performer at all resolutions, though I thought the 1280X1024 was starting to look a little bit pressured. On the whole however, it's a clear and sharp image with a pretty standard design to it. The screen is perhaps not quite as flat as some of the others but the picture quality is very good. Considering the price, this monitor comes heartily recommended.

# MICROSCAN 5V Supplier ADI Telephone 0181-236 0801 Price £511.13 Rating

# HITACHI CM620ET Supplier Hitachi Telephone 0181-849 2092 Price £485.28 Rating

# FlexScan F56

I WAS pretty impressed with this clear, bright monitor until I realised the top set of pixels had been lopped off the screen. It wasn't until I started testing it thoroughly that I noticed, but I could only retrieve them by reducing the screen size by about 25 per cent. Not an ideal situation

It's ironic really, because everything else about the monitor is great. It had full controls over all the options available to you, it's crystal clear and all the tests that don't rely on that top row of pixels were good. But, loss of part of the screen is more than a little inexcusable, and the price is at the top end of the scale for your troubles.

Rating	****
Price	£703.83
Telephone	01483 757118
Supplier	Eizo
FLEXSCAN	F56



# **Trinitron Monitors**

WHEN it comes down to it, monitors can be roughly pigeon holed into two categories - those that use Trinitron technology and those that don't. Briefly, Trinitron is a type of cathode ray tube developed by Sony in an attempt to increase the overall quality of their monitors, and is now widely used by many manufacturers.

You can tell a Trinitron monitor just by looking at it. On 17 inch monitors, you will see two faint lines across the screen. These are present because the Trinitron tubes use an aperture grille rather than the usual shadow masking technology. The difference is that while regular cathode ray tubes use shadow masks (metal plates with small holes in) to direct the electron guns onto the screen, the aperture grille is a number of thin wires that run vertically.

In order to keep these wires in line and unaffected by external electromagnetic fields, it is necessary to support them with two damping wires. These cast a shadow on the screen leaving the two

This is, in my opinion, the disadvantage. The advantage is that you get slightly finer dot pitches (more on screen detail at very high resolutions) and brighter screens. It's a matter of preference, but I think that the lines outweigh the increase in other areas. As a result, because this is a deliberate part of the technology I've sectioned off these into a mini review of their own. However, please bear in mind that I have knocked one mark off each monitor with this, because I don't like it. If you don't mind it, simply add the mark back on to get a personalised score.

# Nokia 447Xav

NO PRIZES for guessing that the "av" in this monitor's moniker stands for audio visual. It's another model with a built in speaker and microphone system. In actual fact I thought the speakers on this model were much better than those on the NEC model. Still not up to a nice meaty pair of proper speakers, but not a bad effort for monitor

This came with a driver that self installed and a monitor test that makes setting up really easy. The downside of all this is those visible lines again though, particularly when using applications with white screens.

mounted jobbies.

### **NOKIA 447XAV**

Supplier Nokia

01793 512809 Telephone £675.63 Price

Rating



# Multiscan 200sf

I'D heard excellent things about the Sonv models, which were mostly justified. Full marks for supplying a driver disk, specifically to run under Windows 95 (my commiserations go out to other OS users) which worked perfectly well.

The picture was clear and bright, but the damper wire shadows came through quite strongly. The on-screen menu is

comprehensive, which explains the increase in price over the other Sony model and the quality of the picture is good, except for the Trinitron wires shadows, which I found to be significantly irritating.

### **MULTISCAN 200SF** Supplier Sony

Telephone 01932 816417 Price £586.33

Rating





HERE we find ourselves with a monitor that comes with the Trinitron lines across the screen. This does make the screen clear and bright, but the lines knock this advantage down in

my opinion.

In fact, I don't think this monitor would win any beauty competitions

anyway. The box is a bit two tone for my liking, and the control functions take you through a slightly complicated menu that can be a bit tricky to find your way around. It's a reasonable quality monitor, I just hate those

### **NOKIA 447XI** Supplier Nokia 01793 512809 Telephone Price £587.49

Rating

Diamond Pro 67TXV THIS is another entry

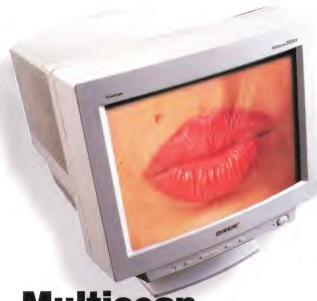
level model, though it's a little bit out priced by some of the others. There is no denying how clear the screen is. and it's reasonably easily adjustable. It doesn't have quite the adjust options of some of

the others, but I didn't really need them anyway, even when fiddling with high resolutions. A really nice monitor, but those lines really get my goat.

### **DIAMOND PRO 67TXV**

Mitsubishi Supplier Telephone 01707 278684 £586.33 Price

Rating



Multiscan 200sx

ANOTHER aperture grill model with damping wires (see those shadows) this is lovely in almost every other respect, especially the price. The on-screen menu system doesn't allow you to alter quite as much as you might want, and as a result I noticed a slight convergence of colours problem though it was only slight. The controls that are there, which mostly configure the size and shape of the working area are

The picture itself is bright and clear, though I thought the highest resolution was coming up a tad blurred. I still don't

**MULTISCAN 2005X** Supplier Sony Telephone 01932 816417 Price £499.38

think this ruins it more than those damping wire shadows though. This is a decent price for what you get, as long as you can cope with the shadows.

# **Diamond** Pro **87TXM**

NO SURPRISES for guessing that this too has what I am starting to consider to be the damper wire problem - two more lines across the screen. If I didn't know about them by now, I think I'd be starting to think that there was something wrong with my eyes.

Other than that this is another lovely clear monitor with fresh colours. It features slightly more controls than the other Mitsubishi model, though the buttons are the same - the on-screen display is slightly more complex and gives extra control over things like colours. Although you may notice slight discrepancies in quality of things like colour convergence in tests, in real terms these are barely noticeable to anyone but a graphics professional. This Pro 87TXM goes up to 1280X1024 resolution but has a hefty price tag, especially considering the damper wires.



### **DIAMOND PRO 87TXM**

Supplier Mitsubishi Telephone 01707 278684 £821.33 Price

Rating



# can see clearly now

I WAS flabbergasted at how many monitor manufacturers have plumped for the Trinitron monitor technology with the lines across it. I noticed these straight away, initially thinking they were faults. So I did a quick straw poll of the office monitors to see which models also had these damping wires on them.

The only one I found was on a 15" Gateway badged monitor on Darren Evans' desk. I pointed out the line to him and asked whether he found them annoying.

'Er, I hadn't, because I hadn't noticed it," he replied, "But I will do now." I'm sure that the monitor manufacturers will think I'm being picky, but I simply wouldn't be happy with forking out in excess of £450 in order to have two lines obscuring my crystal clear monitor.

As a result, I haven't plumped for any of these. They have clearer displays and are perhaps a tad more brilliant in their colours than the monitors that don't use it, but give me a clear screen any day.

So, as a result, these models have been marked down. When it comes down to it, there are no incredible differences between the monitors here so price is very important. I found little in the sub £550 monitors to complain about, and I certainly don't think anyone upgrading to one of these cheaper models is going to be disappointed.

# **Ergovision 750 TC095**

THIS very reasonable monitor will go up to a 1600X1200 resolution. It comes with a comprehensive manual but no driver disks - up to date Windows 95 drivers can be downloaded from the Web site (http://www.taxan.co.uk) if you have access. I didn't notice a grand scale of

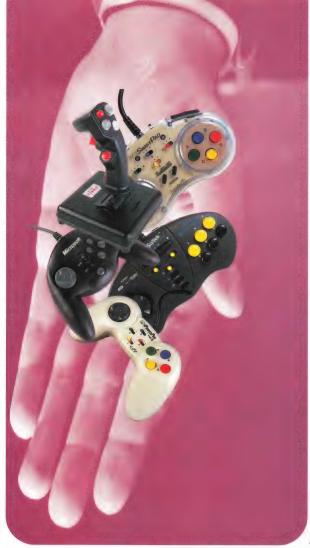
difference between setting it up this way and

by using the recommended SuperVGA 1600 by 1200 standard option.

As with the other Trinitrons, this model had faint damper wires showing through onto the screen. They weren't as well defined as on the Sony but still very present. The menu system isn't the best I've seen, though in theory you should only have to use that once. Nice enough, if it wasn't for those shadows.



Supplier	
	01344 484646
Price	£609.83



HERE are so many joysticks and joypads on the market at the moment that any attempt at purchasing one rapidly dissolves into a lottery draw. So, instead of fumbling around in the dark, compare their vital statistics with our all time favourite Top Trumps method. One day, all consumer roundups will be presented in this manner.

Shuffle the deck, deal out the cards and check Andy Shaw's sleeves for aces in this special interactive game controller roundup

# Handful of



## Features Key:

- T Throttle
- R Rudder
- C Coolie Hat (x = How many if more than one are present)
- A(x) Auto Fire (x = number of auto firemodes)
  - H Headphones and attachments
  - Y Built in Y splitter









Overall







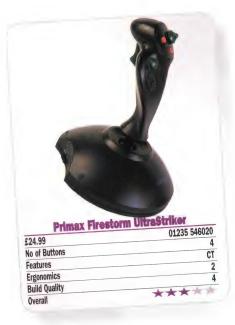
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**Build Quality** Overall

Saltek My.s	21M Madanad VII
Saitek MX-6	31M Megapad XII
	0171-278 0050
No of Buttons	0171-278 0050
No of Buttons Features	0171-278 0050 6 A(6)
No of Buttons	0171-278 0050











Features Ergonomics

Overall

**Build Quality** 







**Build Quality** Overall















Trust Predator					
£29.99	01376 501146				
No of Buttons	4				
Features	C				
Ergonomics	4				
Build Quality	3				
Overall	***				



TA(1)

\*\*\*\*

Ergonomics

**Build Quality** 

Overall

£19.99

No of Buttons

Features

Overall

Ergonomics

**Build Quality** 



\*\*\*



Overall



\*\*\*







# ompoter Sompoter Somp CCS UPDATE JUNE 97

**Explorer 97 Extreme 97** 

This Month we see the 12x Toshiba CD-ROM as standard across all systems. This CD-ROM has been receiving excellent write ups in the press and we are glad to make it part of our 97 range. Also we are looking at stocking the new AMD K6 processors. If you are interested in the chips please give our sales team a ring. Thanks for now see you next month...:)

Upgrade Prices include VAT

# Entra 97

• Intel Triton 430 HX Chipset

• 2Mb 64bit Graphics Card

4.3Gb EIDE Hard Drive

• 15" FST Digital Monitor

Wavetable 32 Sound Card

Soundwave 40 Speakers

• Win 95 Pro Keyboard

Mouse and Mouse Mat

• Windows 95 v2

• 5 Year Warranty

• 16Mb Fast EDO Ram

• 512Kb Pipeline Cache

## • Intel Triton 430 HX Chipset

- 32Mb Fast EDO Ram
- 512Kb Pipeline Cache
- 2Mb 64bit Graphics Card
- 4.3Gb EIDE Hard Drive

- 15" FST Digital Monitor
- Wavetable 32 Sound Card
- Soundwave 40 Speakers
- 33,600 Super Flux Modem
- Win 95 Pro Keyboard
- Mouse and Mouse Mat
- Windows 95 v2
- 5 Year Warranty
- INTERNET READY

### Intel Triton 430 HX Chipset

- 32Mb Fast EDO Ram
- 512Kb Pipeline Cache
- 4Mb S3D Graphics Card
- 4.3Gb EIDE Hard Drive

- 15" FST Digital Monitor
- Wavetable 32 Sound Card
- Soundwave 40 Speakers
- 33,600 Super Flux Modem
- Win 95 Pro Keyboard
- Mouse and Mouse Mat • Windows 95 v2 & Bundle A
- 5 Year Warranty
- INTERNET READY

### • Intel Triton 430 HX Chipset

Gamer 97

- 32Mb Fast EDO Ram
- 512Kb Pipeline Cache
- 4Mb mystique Graphics Card
- 4.3Gb EIDE Hard Drive
- 12X Toshiba CD ROM Drive 12X Toshiba CD ROM Drive 12X Toshiba CD ROM Drive
  - 15" FST Digital Monitor
- Mini Tower or Desktop Case Mini Tower or Desktop Case Mini Tower or Desktop Case
  - Wavetable 32 Sound Card
  - Soundwave 40 Speakers
  - 33,600 Super Flux Modem
  - Win 95 Pro Keyboard
  - · Mouse and Mouse Mat
  - Windows 95 v2
  - 5 Year Warranty
  - INTERNET READY

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# Hardware, from full City

PCs to all sorts of peripherals, reviewed and rated for your perusal

# Agfa SnapScan

THE SnapScan is Agfa's entry-level solution for those looking for an affordable scanner that offers good quality images. It's a 24-bit affair with an optical resolution of 300x600 dpi and will set you back just £199.

It's also a SCSI device and comes with an Adaptec 1502AP SCSI adapter card. This caused a problem for me due to the fact that I already have a SCSI adapter in my PC and the 50-way centronics to 25-way SCSI cable was inappropriate for the mini SCSI socket on my NCR 815.

Hardly a disaster, but other SCSI-based PC owners with SCSI adapters that don't have a 25-way socket will need to buy a replacement cable (make sure it's long enough). Other than this inconvenience, installation was a snap (pun intended) with Windows 95 automatically detecting the scanner and installing the driver for it.

Unlike other low-cost scanners, the SnapScan is a single-pass model. This means that the scanning CCD grabs all three colours (red, green and blue) from the image in one sweep. Obviously, this is a slightly faster process than multiple-pass scanners that sweep the image for each separate colour.

For situations where you are scanning bulky material, such as thick books, the lid is easily removed. Quite handy.

There's also an impressive software bundle. FotoSnap and FotoLook are two TWAIN compatible scanning drivers which allow you to use your scanner with any graphics applications that supports TWAIN devices, such as Photoshop.

FotoSnap is the simplest of the two whereas FotoLook is for advanced users. Also bundled is Ulead's PhotoImpact 3.0SE, an impressive image editing product.

Agfa's SnapScan is a good value for money, fast and easy-to-use scanner that should be high on your shopping list. - DE

### AGFA SNAPSCAN Supplier Agfa

Telephone 0181-231 4120

RRP £199



# **GrafixStar 450**

3-D graphics accelerators are proliferating all over the place and the current crops on offer are all priced from £150 onwards. The GrafixStar 450 however, is VideoLogic's low-cost entry level solution and will only set you back a mere £85.

Onboard this diminutively priced piece of 3-D hardware you'll find 2Mb of EDO ram, expandable to 4Mb for those who like big resolutions and millions of colours. The 3-D wizardry is handled by a 64-bit S3 Virge chip which offers standard 3-D hardware features such as texture mapping, perspective correction, bi and tri-linear filtering as well as MIP mapping to make all those in-game textures look awfully nice when viewed close-up. Oh, and the GrafixStar 450 is a 2-D/3-D hybrid card so it will also act as your Windows accelerator.

You also get quite a nice software bundle. There's a game pack featuring 3-D accelerated versions of Havoc, Actua Soccer and also

My main criticism is that the VESA version is 1.2, which causes problems with quite a few modern games that require VESA 2.0. It often requires a software fix using Scitech Display Doctor, which

There's also three multimedia graphics packages from Prolab in the pack. ImageFolio is a multimedia image processing application,

package and finally there's MediaScope,

a three-in-one multimedia CD player for media, music and MPEG CDs.

Performance-wise, the GrafixStar offered average gains in the 3-D department with good 2-D capabilities under Windows. For only £85, the GrafixStar 450 offers good value for money and is worth checking out if you're looking for a low-cost entry to the wonderful world of accelerated 3-D gaming. - DE

# **Home Movie System**

HOME video editing is fast becoming very popular thanks to the release of low-cost video editing hardware and software from such companies as miro and Fast.

Now, complete PC systems are appearing which offer video editing hardware for those who enjoy sprucing up their home videos the digital way. The Home Movie

System from The Electric Scribe Company is one such system and is aimed squarely at the home video editing enthusiast.

Inside you'll find a speedy P166 with 32Mb of ram, a hefty 2.5Gb hard disk and an eight speed CD-Rom, all housed in a midi tower case. You also get a Sony Trinitron 15in monitor to view all your editing actions.

The Home Movie System is based around the miro DC10 video editing system. The editing software is MediaStudio 2.5 Video Edition from Ulead which is bundled as standard with the miro DC10.

Connecting video equipment is achieved through composite or S-Video inputs at the rear of the PC. Audio is supplied by a

Creative Labs AWE 32.

Speakers were also supplied in the package but they are somewhat simplistic offering only 4W output power, so I suggest you make use of your hi-fi if present.

Overall, for simple populinear video

Overall, for simple non-linear video editing, the Home Movie System is OK for those wanting a ready-built PC. The

software bundle could have been more comprehensive though despite the pretty good Ulead video editing package. Video leads would have been a bonus

too. - DE

# **Orchid Righteous 3D**

IN this day and age of super machine intensive 3-D graphics, accelerator cards are becoming understandably popular. A couple of big names have made their entrance onto this scene lately, and one of them is Orchid, with its Righteous attitude. The card itself is half length and simple to install – it's a matter of slotting it into a PCI slot next to your graphics card and connecting the two together with a pass-

e che la cere de la la la cere

through cable. You connect your monitor directly to the Righteous. Driver installation is similarly painless, and the Orchid drivers along with the latest version of Direct X (4.03 in this case) were on my hard

drive in a matter of minutes. It was then I had a few problems. Trying to run any Direct 3D application caused my machine to lock up, though it worked fine with the Fatal Racing demo under Dos. A visit to the Orchid Web site it revealed that the S3 868 chipset on my Diamond Stealth was the cause of the trouble, as the memory address it was using was conflicting with the Righteous. A quick patch download, a few modifications to

A quick patch download, a few modifications to my AUTOEXEC.BAT file and the card worked perfectly. What a dream. The demos look awesome and were really smooth on my P100

based system.

GLQuake, the specially enhanced 3dFX Quake (the Righteous is a 3dFX based card) looked the absolute business too, but more importantly its frame rate test gave some indication of the speed increase my system had got from the Righteous. In 640x480 SVGA, the frame rate had increased to 24.9 fps, from 9.7. Very, very impressive

stuff. - DA





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# Video Phone Upgrade Kit



Rating

VIDEO conferencing is one of those things that seems like a really fantastic idea until you realise that purchasing and setting up the system might be a little expensive. Obviously, you've got to get a video camera, some way of attaching it to your PC, a connection to a phone line and someone else to talk to.

Previously, you would have had to gather these parts together yourself before working out how they all connect, but this upgrade kit cleverly supplies everything you need short of the modem and the

person to communicate with. It bundles a 640x480 resolution 16million colour camera with a built in microphone, a TV card to connect this to (which needs to be attached to your graphics card via a regular feature connector) and the software to run it all. Incidentally, the TV card is fully functional and will also let you watch broadcasts on your PC.

You can use the video phone across a normal telephone line, but the real functionality comes when you use the Internet. Depending on your service provider, you should be able to use the video phone internationally for the price of a local call, though obviously this depends on how you connect to the Web.

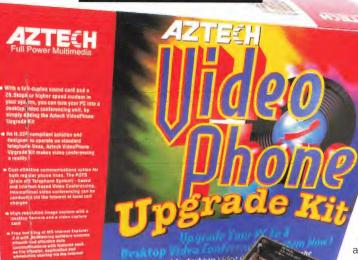
This is one of those things that you really need another person with one to use properly. I cold called a few people who I found on a Web site but they were a little bit strange to say the least, pointing their cameras at everywhere but their faces. The system is compliant with the H.324 standard so should work with anyone else's video phones that also comply.

> If you can persuade someone else to buy one, it works remarkably well. It's a little complicated to set-up, not least of all because each item of

> > manual and there are lots of connections to be made. Once it's going though, the software is simple, the picture is clear and the transfer of audio and video over the Web is quite reasonable. If you have friends or relatives you can communicate with, this is a good set-

equipment in the box comes with its own

up with decent components that does the job rather well. - AS



### **DATAWISE CD-PRO**

Supplier Memory Technology 0118-977 1588 Telephone RRP £210.33

Rating

and .



# **Datawise CD-Pro**

THERE are a number of reasons why you might need an external CD-Rom drive. Perhaps you don't have any spare drive bays. Maybe you have a laptop from before the days when built-in CD-Rom drives were common. You might even need two CD-Rom drives for some reason, or do you find installing internal pieces of equipment a bit worrying?

Whatever your motive, this particular piece of kit is easy to install. It's an 8-speed drive which connects to your PC via the parallel port, with the parallel cable that comes supplied. This alone almost made me fall off my chair - in my experience I've only come across a couple of parallel products that bother to bundle the required cable.

The back of the machine comes with a parallel out port, which enables you to attach a printer in a chain configuration. Install the driver software from the disk (I needed the Windows 95 CD-Rom too) and you're away. The installation instructions are really well laid out and make hooking the thing up a breeze.

The drive works as you would expect a standard 8-speed CD-Rom device to. Your computer assigns it a letter which works through both Dos and Windows. If this is a second CD-Rom drive on your system, for whatever reason, then this works fine too.

I was impressed with the overall ease of setup. CD-Rom drives have never been the most complicated of upgrades, especially since most popular models can be driven from a sound card, but this brings the complication factor down to zero. For mobile users without a CD or those who aren't particular about getting all their peripherals installed internally, this is a rather neat option - AS

# **MMS-702 Speakers**

THERE are so many different pairs of speakers specifically designed to support your PC on the market now that making any kind of choice is distinctly problematic. Most people will probably have amplified speakers which were bundled with their machines when they

bought it and won't have thought twice about replacing them.

If you're thinking of this particularly easy upgrade though, these are a nice pair of affordable speakers that have, as they say, a gimmick. This comes in the form of a Super Bass knob as well as the usual power button and volume knob. This allows for boomy deep bass effects - if you listen to repetitive drum beat type music while working on your spreadsheet or play games with lots of bass explosions (insert this issue's hundredth Quake mention here) then a bass boost will probably really tickle you.

In a way, I suppose this is a bit like a cheap way of getting a similar effect to a sub-woofer. Although this won't get your desktop throbbing with bass rhythms, it does give a pretty good impression of space, with a cranked up bass providing deep resounding sound even when the volume is low.

Considering that your average sub-woofer system is going to cost upwards of £50, these speakers are a very viable budget

option. You don't get the bass power of a more expensive system, but you do get a more affordable if less powerful alternative. - AS

**MMS-702 SPEAKERS** LSL Multimedia Supplier Telephone 0800-980 0575 RRP £24.99

Rating





UNABLE to quite make it into last month's digital camera round up, Sony sent us this little beauty for a somewhat belated review this month.

This tiny camera is big in terms of features. Its deceptive exterior houses 4Mb of ram which will hold up to 108 pictures at a 640x480 resolution. This is at the greatest level of JPEG compression - there is a standard mode (58 pictures) and a fine mode (30 pictures) too, which obviously lets the camera hold fewer images but they aren't as harshly compressed.

For such a small camera it has a lot of options on the actual device - the software is just used to transfer the images from the unit to the PC. The most obvious groovy extras are the LCD screen on the back which updates in real time showing you the picture you're about to take. The lens will rotate 180 degrees too, enabling you to take pictures of yourself.

The display is surrounded by buttons allowing you to simply improve the pictures you're taking using flash, a self timer and the like.

> This is further enhanced with a menu system that uses a combined wheel and button type affair as seen on the Microsoft IntelliMouse. This suits the design perfectly and gives access to a load of further options, taking their names from more conventional camera techniques such as shutter speed and level of exposure.

There's no denying that this is a beautifully designed camera. For the more experienced photographer it gives a lot more control over the picture from the start, without necessarily having to go into an image processor. Having said this, the final quality is not significantly better than

SONY DSC-F1 Supplier Sony Telephone 01932 816000 RRP £699.13 Rating

some cheaper models, and the extra control doesn't quite justify the steep price. - AS



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# Coming Next Month

The August issue not only comes complete with the best full product ever given away - anywhere - but is also jam packed with some of the best On editorial ever written - honest! Here's what you can expect... sale 29th

> **EVERY NEW GAME REVIEWED AND RATED** Computer The essential guide to home computing clinic

Your PC can go wrong in a frightening number of ways, but many of the problems you encounter can be fixed without too much in the way of technical know-how or competence. It's just a case of knowing what you're doing, what to look out for and what the causes could be. Well, OK that all sounds pretty complicated, but really a lot of it is down to good common sense. Next month our talented do in an emergency. And don't worry - they haven't lost a

we've ever given away? Possibly! Next month's coverdisc is the excellent drawing package CoreIDRAW 3. Not just a demo mind you, or a timebombed version.

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Millennium Bugged

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> and how could it affect you? We'll tell you next

June

What problems will the year 2000 pose for your PC

And the ail sentence you car expect to receive

We unveil our new Internet section the Web - bring you tips on Battlecruiser 3000 and MDK in Home and Dry, preview the best up and coming adventure games in Under Development, expand the Leisure Dome and solve yet more problems in our First Aid section. And of course there's loads more for you to get your teeth into. So put your order in now...

Contents subject to change without notice

## 20 crimes to commit with your PC...

OK, so we promised it for this issue but you know how these things are! Anyway, the longawaited follow-up to November's 50 Things to do with your PC... feature will definitely (maybe) make this issue. And, as we said in these very pages last month, this time we're looking at the more criminal activities which a home computer can be put to. If you fancy doing some serious time at her majesty's pleasure then this is the fea-

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\* Modems subject to availability; £10 shipping charge applies

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# Low cost video editing and much more!

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Video Editing	H/W MJPEG Conferencing <sup>1</sup>	Video Output	PC to TV MPEG	Hardware _ Option	TV Tuner Feature	'PC-VCR'	DVD Upgradeable
Matrox Rainbow Runner Studio	~	V	V	V	4	V	
ATI All-In-Wonder			V		V		V
Miro DC10	V	-					-
Fast AV Master	V						- 1
Pinacle Video Director 200	Linear						





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